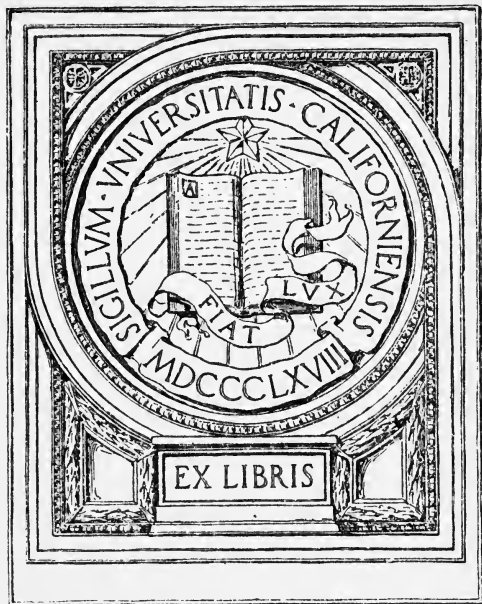


RHYMES
OF
VERMONT
RURAL
LIFE

DANIEL L. CADY

GIFT OF
J. J. Cudworth



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Christmas 1920

Ethel & Guy

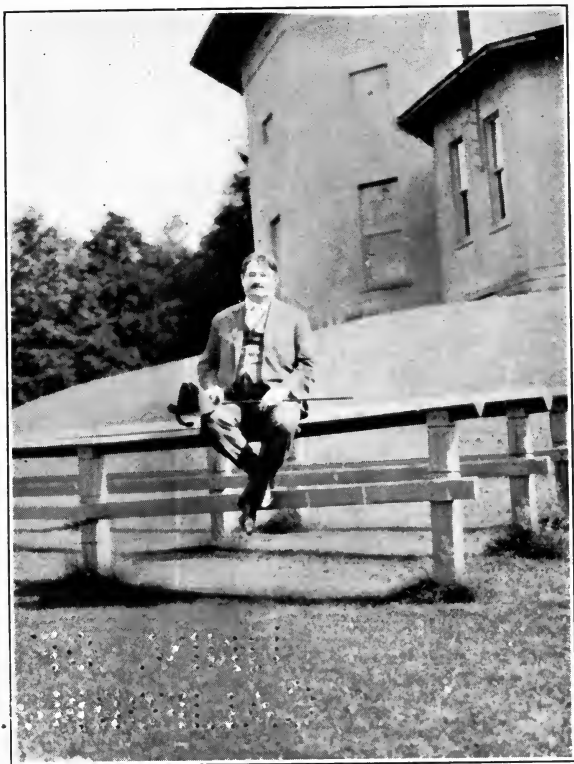






Rhymes *of*
Vermont Rural Life

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Rhymes *of* Vermont Rural Life

By
DANIEL L. CADY



——The measure of a poet is the largeness of thought which he can apply to any subject, however trifling.

LAFCADIO HEARN,
Appreciations of Poetry



THE TUTTLE COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
RUTLAND, VERMONT
1920



Gift of J. J. Cudworth

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THE TUTTLE COMPANY
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Acknowledgment is hereby made of polite permission to reprint given by the "Burlington Free Press," the "Rutland Herald," "The Barre Times," the "Burlington News," "The Vermonter," "The Boston Globe," etc.

My thanks are also due to the publishers, The Tuttle Company, for an interest in the volume so friendly, that if it were generally shown, there would exist between the swain with his manuscript, and the owner of many printing presses, only the very best of feeling.

These pieces were all written during the time of the great war, which accounts for some of them, and for numerous allusions in others of no special "Vermont" significance.

The volume contains one-hundred-seven pieces in all, with one-hundred-fourteen mentions of Vermont localities: sixteen of the pieces were written in Florida, fifty-one in New York and forty in Vermont.

Burlington, October 6th, 1919



TO

Mary Elizabeth Cady

MY APPRECIATIVE WIFE

THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

VERMONT

For fourteen years an independent republic; first exemplar in America of a unicameral government; first political booster that ever made good. Birthplace of Saxe, who with a Cambridge setting, would have outshone the Cantabrians themselves, and of Edmunds with legal attainments so high that he threw aside an appointment to the supreme bench. Home of the inventor of the circular saw and of the first scientific weighing machines.

Bounded on the West by the gem of the lakes of America, and on the East by the sweetest stream that flows—willow-fringed Connecticut; remote, yet not unfriended nor unfriendly. Bucolic yet academic, her villages the beauty spots of New England, with entire streets of homes in every one of which dwells some person familiar with Virgil and on friendly terms with Horace. As her mountains look down upon the storms of earth, so do her robust people look down upon the frivolities of mankind; the cheerful guest, the evening fire, the ready chair, the feast with plenty crowned—these make up Vermont.

Daniel L. Cady in "The Vermonter," August, 1910.

THE VERMONTER

Liberty-loving in the extreme: counting no cause small in which justice is concerned; careless of superficialities; deliberate in decision; droll in speech; piercing to the heart of a matter with shrewd, discerning instinct; never fooled twice in the same way; expecting to work hard for every penny and anticipating a reasonable amount of disappointment; shrewd in a bargain; tough in capacity for work; holding by a cause through thick and thin; and always with more in him than shows in his gait:—such is the Vermonter, one of the most picturesque, and certainly not the least useful, of typical American men.

*President John M. Thomas in "The Vermonter,"
January, 1909.*

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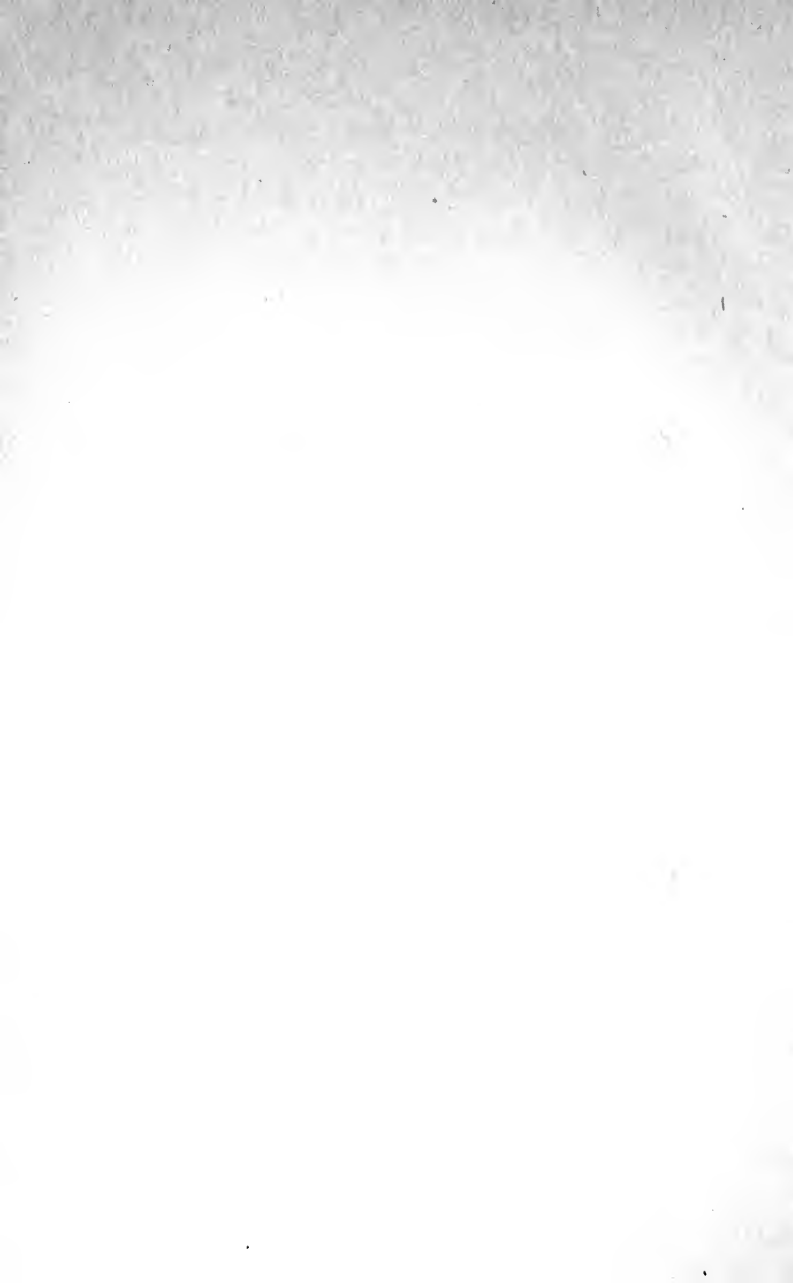
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I KEEP some portion of my earlier dream,
Brokenly bright, like moonbeams on a river:
It lights my life—a far elusive gleam—
Moves as I move, and leads me on forever.

—*J. T. Trowbridge*



RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

VERMONT WILL DO HER PART

(April 6th, 1917)

WHO would be free himself must strike
The liberating blow;
This truth our fathers felt and rose
In might against their foe;
For this their blood besprent the corn
And stained the winter snow.

For not full-armed from Jovian head
Did Freedom's person spring,
Nor did the clouds let fall the stone
That shotted David's sling;
The sons of men must save themselves
When war's alarums ring.

Each man who would his home defend,
Who would his rights maintain,
And see his country wear no yoke,
His children wear no chain,
Must have a purpose in his heart,
A vision in his brain.

RYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Must have a helmet for his head,
A halberd for his hand,
And be prepared to give or take
The order of command:
The warders may not leave the walls
If Freedom's bastions stand.

Each generation Freedom's creed
Must be with harshness taught,
And freemen warned that all they have
And are was dearly bought;
And oft must Lexington be roused
And Concord's fight be fought.

Do Liberty's inspiring strains
Within our souls resound?
Shall we forsake the seas we sailed
Before the Hun was crowned,
And feebly plead for peace when peace
May not on earth be found?

No; no; I see ten thousand men
From hill and valley start,
From forest, farm and factory,
From mansion-house and mart;
Vermont as in the glorious past
Will do her glorious part.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

"HALF A CROP" IN VERMONT

WHEN I was young I used to hear
The same sad story every year;
The farmers punctually agreed
They wouldn't raise enough for seed;
They might have jest as well set still,
They said, and saved their phosphate bill—
They might as well have "shut up shop,"
There wouldn't be but half a crop.

The moon was either wet or dry,
And swung too low or hung too high;
The Dipper dipped too much one way,
Though which way 'twas, they didn't say;
The Spring was late or extra late,
And piles of pullets failed to mate,
And if it rained, or tried to stop,
In either case 'twas Good Night Crop.

The seeded piece, it didn't ketch
Except to poor man's weed and vetch;
The oats was thin, the crows was thick,
The garden sass was looking sick,
The apples wasn't doing well,
There'd be no Astrakans to sell;
And even popcorn wouldn't pop,
That is, not more than half the crop.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I often think what pains they took
To prove Vermont was Sandy Hook;
I wonder what they'd thought or said
If they had farmed at Marblehead;
I guess 'twould make their backbones sigh
To work Wyoming alkali,
Or if they'd seen a cyclone hop
They might have spoke of half a crop.

And yet as long as I was 'round
I never saw no cropless ground;
I never saw a crop derailed—
'Twas croppers, not the crops, that failed;
The things so slow to grow in Spring
In Summer grew like everything;
They hiked so fast they couldn't stop
And every year rolled up its crop.

Jest start with me what day you will
From Corbett's farm in Underhill;
Go up and down the state, each side,
And note the valleys rich and wide;
See Newbury's meadows, clover sweet,
And them that border Windsor Street,
See farms that crowd each mountain top—
Then talk to me of half a crop!

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

A VERMONT BREAKFAST

WHEN summer days speed up so fast
That August bumps September,
You need a breakfast that will last,
And, 'less I disremember,
There's nothing 'round the morning hour
With which a man can grapple
Like good salt pork, and plenty o'nt,
Enriched with good fried apple.

It doesn't fade away so soon
Your stomach squirms with wonder;
A saint can work right up to noon
And not be "sawn asunder";
It beats them package foods a mile—
That top-shelf ten-cent scrapple—
Jest hand me good old fried salt pork
Enriched with good fried apple.

Good solid pork, a-salted down
'Way back there last November,
That sputters sweet and spatters brown,
And, 'less I disremember,
Them apples by the garden gate
That had a reddish dapple—
Yes; that's the kind of pork I mean,
And that's the kind of apple.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Jest wipe 'em where your hand is flat,
And slice 'em thin and slanting,
And tip 'em in the spider fat
The while it's hot and panting;
Say; that's the kind of morning dish
With which the soul can grapple—
Good sweet salt pork, and plenty o'nt,
Enriched with good fried apple.

A meal that bids the spirit sing—
The dish that saves September;
And yet there's jest one other thing,
And, 'less I disremember,
A good cream gravy starts the stuff
A-sliding past your thrapple,
And makes that pork celestial pig
And glorifies that apple.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

"FARMING IT" IN VERMONT

I'VE wondered all my life how 'tis
A farmer gets along so well;
He has so many things to buy
And such a precious few to sell!
His calling calls for such a snarl
Of tools, equipment, traps and gear,
I don't see how he saves enough
To go to Boston every year.

A legal gent can start in trade
With nothing but an office cat;
The town lot booster only needs
A little deskroom in his hat;
But Mr. Farmer has to have
An outfit, and that isn't all,
That outfit has to stand the strain
Of Summer, Winter, Spring and Fall.

He even can't slip into town
A day like this without a sleigh,
A harness, blanket, whip and lash,
A laprobe, horse and hank of hay;
While other "toys" that help him do
His work with neatness and despatch,
Are logging bobs, a traverse sled,
Some blasting powder and a match;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Two heavy harnesses, an axe,
 A saw and sawbuck, adze and bar;
A hoghook and some candlesticks,
 A tackle block and pot of tar;
A suction pump, a skein of chains,
 Two kettles of capacious brass;
A barrel each for pork and beef
 And soap and cider applesass;

Hoes, cultivator, weeder, cart,
 A winnowing mill and Fairbanks scales;
A roller, cheese-press, pung and plow,
 A hammer and a can of nails;
A 'vaperator, holder, tubs,
 A sapyoke, pan and flail and churn;
A spreader, tedder, scythe and snath,
 A grinstone and a boy to turn;

A sprayer, sprinkler, wagon-jack,
 A canthook, shovels, stoneboat, sledge;
A nest of measures, baskets seven,
 A beetle and an iron wedge;
A shotgun, fishpole, sickle, forks,
 A government report on "Soil";
A harrow, barrow, sheepshears, vise,
 Some Spavin Cure and harness oil;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Three kinds of rakes; horse, bull and hand,
A cradle, sheller, woodchuck traps;
A hayfork, planter, mower, drill,
An extry pole and holdback straps;
A ladder, lantern, saddle, dog,
An oxyoke and a yoke of stags;
A buggy, gig and lumber rig,
And last, a span of working nags.

No other business or profesh
Can come within a hunderd miles
Of such preparedness, and yet
The buying farmer buys and smiles;
He knows that when he fades away
The auction bill will spread his fame,
And show, although his name be Smith,
That he had something to his name.

GREASING BOOTS IN VERMONT

TO keep a feller's boots in trim,
In former days was up to him;
No valet with his lasts and trees
Was 'round to put your feet at ease;
Each boy was taught a-what to do
To make his cowhides winter through;
Each grown-up knew by head and heart
The gentle leather-softening art,
And life, aside from small disputes,
Was largely passed in greasing boots.

The grease pail of that elder day
Was kept inside the sullerway,
Up near the unburnt brick and corks
With which you scoured the knives and forks;
You took a pail of common tin,
And put ten parts of taller in,
Then three of hens' oil, no; 'twas two,
And then a little lampblack, Whew!—
Behold the stuff that constitutes
The massage cream of cowhide boots.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The night you saw a ribald hue
Around the taps, a-coming through,
You got your bootjack mighty quick,
Before your boots begun to stick,
Removed your boots, but left your feet,
And set the grease pail on to heat;
A-next you looked your cowhides o'er,
Then spread a paper on the floor,
And then fell to—for action suits
The soul that broods o'er ungreased boots.

The while your left hand went inside
The leg, your right the stuff applied;
You give 'em first a priming coat,
The same as you would paint a boat;
It struck in quick and then you went
Around again like fish in Lent,
And when you set 'em down to dry,
If you was young, you heaved a sigh
And thought of shows and turkey shoots,
Or anything but greasing boots.

Then if you saw a little rose,
Or red, around the taps and toes,
You slapped some further ointment on
And rubbed until your strength was gone,

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Then looked 'em over good once more,
To see if they was twelve by four,
Then slammed 'em down beside the stove
And let your boyish fancy rove
To lands of sun and flowers and fruits,
Where there was neither grease nor boots.

And then you used to clean your hand
Two kinds of soap and three of sand;
Some ashes, emery, grit and lye,
And pumice stone, if handy by;
But one thing pleased you, anyway,
You only oiled but once a day,
And through the Summer into Fall
You scarcely had to oil at all:
You felt as free as gulls and coots
When settled weather struck your boots.

VERMONT MORGANS

I NOTICE in my car, when nearing
A road that tips up towards the sky,
The chauffeur opens up his gearing
And spurts like thunder on the high;
It's quite a thrilling engine-feature,
Although I'm half-disposed to swear
It's copied from that nervy creature,
An up-and-coming Morgan mare.

Few petrol charioteers are giving
The "go-by" to the Morgan blood,
Nor is the yoke of oxen living
That's towed a Morgan through the mud;
In Summer's heat or Winter's rigor,
The Morgan "spurt" is always there—
No horseflesh cuts a finer figure,
By Crackie! than a Morgan mare.

Most any man and every woman
Will tell you 'bout a Morgan's eye;
It's so enlit with life, so human,
The Morgan "strain" should mount, not die;
Our folks should rise from Jay to Pownal,
From Burke to Bridport—everywhere—
And take a hand, like Chauncey Brownell,
To save the Morgan horse and mare.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

A bit of far-off Arab splendor
Still shows upon her dappled flanks;
I'm pretty sure the Witch of Endor
Bestrode a Morgan on her pranks;
But long upon our hillsides thriving,
She's like the folks our hillsides bear—
She's hard as nails for work or driving,
The proud, Green Mountain Morgan mare.

She doesn't need a feed of clover
Each time she straightens out to draw;
She always has some grit left over,
She always saves some air to paw;
How well she wears a premium ticket!
How well she stood the battle's blare!
The boys that stopped the charge of Pickett
Each took along a Morgan mare.

So here's to Phillips—man of vision—
The Morgan king of Windsor Street,
Concurren in the old decision
That Morgan horses can't be beat;
He's come from Dixie with his dollars
To boost the breed that's getting rare,
And when a real Vermonter "hollers,"
He hands him out a Morgan mare.

NEW VERMONT NAMES

I USED to like the lowery days
That come along in haying time,
We'd hang around the horsebarn door
And hear the lies of Jonas Prime;
And if it didn't sunburn off
By ten or after, then we'd take
The old express and all pile in
And rattle out to Crystal Lake.

Of course, there wan't no Crystal Lake
About it then—'twas Pickerel Pond;
No "villas" stood along the shore,
No Roman "insulas" beyond;
The cattails grew all 'round the edge,
The eel grass would have stopped a snake—
It never touched our thinking caps
The place would get to be a lake.

We passed "The Falls" a-going out,
Where Tommy Tracy had his forge
For forty years; but now they've gone
And named that sector Rainbow Gorge;
You wouldn't s'pose they'd done the thing
Jest on account of Tommy's sake—
Jest think of passing Rainbow Gorge
And ending up at Crystal Lake!

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

That greenish pond down Dorset way
Is Emerald Waters now, I hear,
And up by Checkerberry Hill
They've got a Checkerberry Mere:
It kinder nips your "home-week nerve,"
It sorter makes your ear bones ache,
To hear a little pout pond called
Prismatic Mere or Silver Lake.

The life has fled from local words,
And antiquarians well may scoff,
When summer boarders name the earth
And camp site boosters sell it off;
If we're ashamed of all our names,
We've little, as a state, at stake;
Joe's Pond might jest as well be Jim's,
And Molly's Pond be Crystal Lake.

I see I've rather got away
From lowery days and haying time,
But, Sakes Alive! these new-name folks
Would dislocate the loftiest rhyme;
Alas! old chaps, who cleared these lands,
Your naming was a big mistake,
Each mudhole now is Amber Creek
And every horsepond Crystal Lake.

FOURTH OF JULY IN VERMONT

WHEN July Fourth was getting near
A feller's days was filled with fear;
The Sunday school would have a ride,
They said, and then 'twould be denied;
A rumored mountain-climbing trip
Was nothing but a lot of lip;
But when the preacher, Mr. Grout,
A-fore the sermon give it out
There'd be a picnic 'Pendence Day
We boys felt better right away.

We knew 'twould be in Walker's woods,
Acrost the brook from Sukey Goode's,
She didn't mind, she used to say,
How much they heel-marked Walker's hay;
But there was lots and lots to do
To put the preparations through;
The Grange settees would have to go
To give the choir a decent show;
The organ, too, or Inez Spring,
Our off-key alto, wouldn't sing.

And first, a scout would go and look
To see if teams could ford the brook,
And then a gang to mow the brakes
And cut the brush and kill the snaix;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The table squad took five or more,
The teter force from two to four;
Another crew to rig the swings
And fetch the drinking water things,
And, last of all, a special band
To build or buy a speakers' stand.

Meantime, the ladies met to see
A-what the eating plan should be;
Should fambls have a fambly lunch,
Or should the allies feed the bunch;
If pinkish lemonade was sold
The "traffic," sure, must be controlled;
And then the speakers—Colonel Jay,
Who come to town to play croquet,
Should he be asked, the rich old thing!
Or should the choir jest sing and sing.

The ladies also made it plain
The sugar house, in case of rain,
Would be the only place to 'scape
And ought to be a-put in shape:
Now comes the picnic—hear the fife,
And see the flags all full of life!
But, Gracious! it's a-took so long
To get this picnic going strong,
I guess I'd better stop right here
And tell the rest another year.

EARLY DAYS IN VERMONT

I'VE read the settlers, bless their souls,
 Would take an iron pan or pot
And go and borrow living coals,
 And fetch 'em home alive and hot;
Jest think of coming through the woods,
 With beasts a-following on your path,
And nothing but a can of coals
 Between you and a panther's wrath!

But what I started out to say
 Is, that in newly settled earth,
You're borrowing something every day
 And lending, too, for all you're worth;
It gets to be a habit soon,
 Like that unthrifty city streak,
Of hocking whatsoe'er you have
 With Uncle Abraham every week.

In them dependent days, I s'pose,
 That what he saw and didn't own,
Upset a settler's eyes and nose
 And instantly he "forced a loan"
Of footstove, emptyings, hetchel, swifts,
 A bear meat sirloin, sampler, sled,
And e'en the copper coins they laid
 Upon the eyelids of the dead.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

They borrowed runnet, milk and tub,
And kettle, paddle, lye and corn;
They borrowed mug and apple shrub
And shot and gun and powderhorn;
A parish wedding meant a shower
Of strictly drummed-up benefits,
For to and fro the spoused ones went
A-borrowing griddle, grease and grits.

But, as the man who owns two pigs
Abjures his socialistic views,
So settler Smart and settler Spriggs,
A-getting wealthy, oft refused
To lend their chattels, goods and wares
To settlers Squawman, Dub and Slack,
Till now it takes about a week
To borrow jest a carpet tack.

**THE PASSING OF THE OLD VERMONT
MEETINGHOUSE**

AS I go up and down these days
Amongst Vermont's delightful people,
I seldom hear a single word
About the meetinghouse or steeple;
The meetinghouse and steeple, too,
It seems are "bending low" today—
The old white-steepled meetinghouse
Is passing fast away.

It's hard to tell the churches now
By either looks or situation,
For some are built like concert halls,
And others like a railroad station;
There's arches, apses, foyers, foils,
And festooned fonts in fine array—
The old white-steepled meetinghouse
Has almost passed away.

How grand they stood upon the hills,
Or at the township's windy center!
How self-respecting were the folks
That came for miles their courts to enter!
The "closest workmen" in the parts,
They built the pulpits, so they say—
Too bad the churchliest church of all
Is passing fast away.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

How grand they stood upon the hills,
And also in the village valleys!
What sign-posts of the soul they were,
What ways and means for "inward" rallies!
How quick their slender steeples caught
The early morn's flirtatious ray!—
Too bad the churchliest church of all
Is marked to pass away.

What art the old-time builders used,
The Wrennish spire, the Doric pillar!
The hand-made pews of fragrant pine
Unvexed by stain or "Sweedish filler:"
They lay upon the landscape's lap,
Like jewels on a lady's tray—
Those temples with their stately spires,
A-doomed to pass away.

I wonder what we stand for now,
We folks whose forbears separated
From too much form—a-scrambling back
To just the things our forbears hated?
We've even got a "service" up,
We often read the prayers we pray—
The old white-steepled meetinghouse,
Of course, must pass away.

"SHOPPING" IN VERMONT

THE hardest work in all the year
Before the horseless car was here,
Was hitching up your Goldsmith Maid
And driving into town to trade;
You hurried up your wife to start,
At noon you only had a tart,
You hurried 'round from store to store
And then was gone till after four.

That tub of butter in behind
Was first and foremost on your mind;
You felt that merchant Hood would say,
"I'd like a special tub to-day;
That last you fetched turned out so good
I took some home to Mrs. Hood:"
This pleasant speech so oft you've heard
Your wife can tell it word for word.

The Mrs. gets some starch at Hood's
And tea—it's simply swapping goods—
And then she says polite but plain,
"I'd like a new all-wool delaine."
"All right," you sigh, and 'crost you go
To Cox's in the block below,
You always like to trade with Cox
For he attends the orthodox.

It takes an age to make that trade,
The cambric, buttons, thread and braid;
But Mrs. smiles so sweet you say,
"Add on an alapacca, May;"
"Oh! no;" says she, "both Roy and Rose
Will soon be needing winter clothes,
And John, we'd better hasten slow,
You lost a cow not long ago."

Then next yourself and Mrs. stop
At Durkee's little druggist's shop
For hemlock essence, camphor gum,
And something that will help your thumb;
That needle, too, you always buy
For poor Aunt Kate, a-kinder sly,
Some bureau stain, a little can,
And hair oil for the hired man.

You have a holdback strap to mend,
Your wife a card to write and send,
You'd like to pay that printer, Mills,
For them there oyster supper bills,
Your wife would like to see "Miss Fitch"
And get that new embroidery stitch,
And so you separate an hour
To double up on errant power.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

At length you hear each other cough
And meet beside the watering trough;
Your wagon, jest acrost the road,
Has got a twenty mule-team load;
You both climb in and settle down,
Too tired to stir, too faint to frown;
"Go 'long," you say, "Go 'long old mare,
Jest take us home or anywhere."

VERMONT WILD FLOWERS IN AUGUST

THE wild flowers all VermonTERS love
Again the countryside adorn;
They're just as much a mercy, too,
As peas and beans or silo corn;
They feed the under-rationed soul,
And might be called a means of grace—
I'm special thankful this forenoon
For chickory and lady's lace.

The early Summer's color scheme
Grows soberer as the year grows old;
There's more a-doing 'mongst the blues
And 'long the line of heavy gold;
The brighter reds and pinks have gone,
I s'pose, to Flora's own embrace,
Though stuffy bee balm keeps along
With chickory and lady's lace.

There's blue vervain, or sacred herb,
And meadowsweet, or honey-wine,
And jewel weed, or touch-me-not,
And hairy-shanks, or columbine;
But clear, pale blue and creamy white—
The colors in an angel's face—
You get them both where chickory grows
All tangled up with lady's lace.

And then there's fire weed, steeplebush,
The cat-tail tribe and bouncing Bet,
And tansy and "St. Johnsburywort,"
And other worts that I forget;
Yet they're not bad, they look all right
Way off in some old pasture place—
They sorter lead the eyesight on
To chickory and lady's lace.

How glad the evening primrose looks!
How straight the figwort stands at morn!
Their kind and they are all that's left
Now that the summer fields are shorn;
But I'm against the golden rod
That blabs of Winter's hurrying pace—
Such talk disturbs the chickory so
And musses up the lady's lace.

I wish that Wallace Nutting's steps
Would take him over Shelburne Hill
Down Hinesburg way—I think he'd get
A dainty water color thrill;
I like the farmers on that road,
Their spirits can't be mean or base,
Or else they wouldn't do so much
For chickory and lady's lace.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Bloom on, dear friends, and do your bit,
You sure shall have this native's praise,
And may your kin in distant France
Survive these ghastly German days;
I wouldn't have one roadside flower
As sad as half the human race—
Crank up the car, let's go and see
The chickory and lady's lace.

SELLING A COW IN VERMONT

“WHOA! Whitey; Morning, Neighbor Bell,
I heerd you had a cow to sell.”

“You heerd it crossways, Neighbor Gale,
I hain’t no special cow for sale.”

“I heerd from Wiggins, up above,
You had a cow you guessed you’d shove.”

“I’ll slap a price on any cow;
What’s that to Wiggins, anyhow?”

“I want a cow for Monday night,
But yourn, I guess, is ruther light.”

“I ain’t your clothespin, Neighbor Gale:
No light cows right ’round here for sale.”

“I want a cow for Tuesday’s cart,
And Hart has got one—one-armed Hart.”

“He tossed the crows two head last year;
There ain’t no Hart stock stopping here.”

“Of course, ’taint none of my concern
If you hain’t got no cow to turn.”

“I’ve got a cow that’s beef, alright,
But I ain’t here to say she’s light.”

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

"I guess, By Gosh! I know the cow,
Her mother stops with Daddy Dow."

"Yes, Sir; she chews a native cud;
She ain't no pop-eye Jersey Blood."

"I had a cow last week from Wright
For twenty-nine, but yourn is light."

"No cows 'round here for twenty-nine,
Leastways, no cows that run with mine."

"If she was all the cow on earth
I s'pose that's 'bout what she'd be worth."

"I'm done with giving cows away,
There's stanchion room and she can stay."

"You see I butcher Monday night;
I'd like the cow—too bad she's light."

"Too bad there ain't no trade in you;
She'll peddle out for thirty-two."

"You've got 'er too tarnation high;
I want a cow a man can buy."

"She's dried tight off and punkin plump;
She ain't all brisket, bones and rump."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

"I ain't a-butcherin jest to see
How big a lunkhead I can be."

"Well; I shan't call it no disgrace
To beef that critter on the place."

"You squeeze my wallet mighty thin,
But Monday morning drive 'er in."

And so we boys got up at five
And snaked 'er in—she wouldn't drive.

Now, note all ye of thoughtful build,
That cow was bought and sold and killed;

Yet on her head no price was set,
No offer ever made or met;

But through some psychometric skill,
Or gumption, call it what you will;

Them dickerers knew where each would break,
What one would give and 'tother'd take.

'Twas thus Vermonters used to trade,
And when were better bargains made!

Hats off to these real trading men—
They're passing not to come again.

"HAVING THE THRASHERS" IN VERMONT

I WONDER if there ever was,
Or will be, such a noise
As them old horse-power thrashers made
When we was Bethel boys—
The barn floor rocked, the corn crib shook,
The hen roost lost its poise.

Such mountains of tremendous sound!
Such valleys full of din!
'Twas like a hunderd thousand loads
Of scrap iron mixed with tin;
'Twas louder than a Sharon saint
Denouncing Randolph sin.

I wonder if there ever was,
Or will be, such a dust
As them old horse-power thrashers raised,
Them mills of "moth and rust;"
We boys all looked like perfect coons
To grandma Tripp's disgust.

Your throat, it felt like sage-brush sauce
A-made with alkali;
Your lungs like sponges dipped in glue
And kept a year to dry;
You couldn't do a thing but wheeze
And wipe the other eye.

I wonder if there ever was
Such ample appetites,
As thrashing menfolks used to have
October noons and nights;
They swallowed everything there was
Excepting wimmen's rights.

The meat and fixings flew around
And perished where they lit;
Each slash of bread and gash of pie
Exactly seemed to fit;
Each "soldier" did, or overdid,
His gastronomic bit.

I wonder if there ever was
Less parting sighs and chokes,
Than thrashing crews and captains left
Amongst the wimmenfolks;
And yet, they brought along with them
A lot of life and jokes.

The thrashing boss I used to know,
With all his dust and sound,
Was better liked than any man
The countryside around—
The grain all shelled, I've heard, the year
They laid him in the ground.

EARLY SPRING IN VERMONT

WINTER'S tune is up,
Spring is almost here;
Fourteen counties smile
To greet the greening year:
Countless stage-struck buds
Wait their turn as leaves—
Nature in Vermont
Never gets the peeves.

Mansfield and The Hump
Bore the Winter well;
Both stand up as straight
As when the first snow fell:
Winooski and Lamoille
Sprint the best they can—
All good things will come
With the hired man.

E'en the crow's raw note
Doesn't sound so bad;
Devil though he is
He seems a little glad;
Listen how "the cars"
Make a different sound,
Seems as though the wheels
Are glad they're going 'round.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Hay will soon be cheap;
 Soon the robins build;
Nothing much but sleds
 And sleighs are winter-killed;
Soon the plow will grinch
 Through the green-sward piece,
And the crying cart
 Get a slap of grease.

Winter wan't so tough!
 Smelt for breakfast food;
Now the syrup tastes
 'Zactly jest as good;
Tomaters up in-doors,
 Gardens half-way dry—
Nothing ails Vermont
 When the sun runs high.

PICKING APPLES IN VERMONT

"WAKE up there, boys, no time to dream,
Back out the cart, hitch up the team;
Get all the baskets, big and small,
And fetch a bag, we'll need 'em all;
And get some salt, we'll salt the sheep
And make what card folks call a sweep;
The little ladder, fetch that, too,
It knows the business bettern you;
And now tie on the apple pole
And then the old red wheels can roll."

Behold the happy outfit start,
A father, horses, boys and cart:
"Yes; Jimmy, you may drive, but see
You don't rip up an apple tree;"
The orchard lays a league away,
A farm that grows abandoned hay,
But chuckablock with natural fruit
And quite a lot of 'grafts to boot;
A luscious land for yearling stock,
Or sheep that love a three mile walk.

"Drive in there, Jimmy, cramp your cart,
And set it facing right to start;
Get up there, Dick, and shake a tree,
But don't fall onto Mike or me;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Don't shake too hard—about like that—
Look up, not down—don't lose your hat;
There comes the rain in big red drops,
Jest keep 'er up until it stops;
Now back down slow—don't be too fleet—
You haven't got no nuthatch feet."

But 'fore the boys can really hit
The job, they have to fool a bit;
They hunt for yallerhammer holes
And play a game of apple bowls,
And run and race like everything
To find the ancient well or spring,
And practice that ballistic trick
Of slinging apples off a stick:
Without a house or barn in sight
The boys would stay all day and night.

And now all hands with right good will
Fall on their knees and pick up-hill;
The fruit from hand to basket hops
And then inside the cart-box drops,
And where the sheep paths overflow
They scoop it up as ducks do dough;
In two short hours the cart is full,
And then begins the homeward pull:
It's "Jimmy, check up Sam and Bill,
We'll start a-towards the cider mill."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Jest halfway home the road turns sharp,
And shows the mill of Sandy Tharp;
They cramp and back and cramp again
And out a-come the helper men;
The load gets shoveled right straight in
To Sandy's thousand-bushel bin,
Which done, they move with quicker pace,
And getting near the homestead place,
"I Snum!" says dad, in chest tones deep,
"We plumb forgot to salt the sheep."

**SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE VERMONT
LEGISLATURE**

WE folks that went to district schools
Are 'bout the biggest set of fools

I know of anywhere;
We had a mile or more to go,
We had to wash our slates with snow,
And yet, the best of what we know
We learned right there.

That's why we ought to brace our feet
And shout: No fancy school can beat
The good old district "hut";
You've got to have a country school
In country regions—any fool—
A baby big enough to drool,
Can crack that nut.

A-carting children forth and back
And 'long acrost the railroad track,
Is "education," Eh!
A-hiring wagons, sleds and sleighs,
And busses, carryalls and drays,
And driving 'round in forty ways,
Is "schooling," Heh!

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

When cartage costs the same about,
Or more than teaching, "school is out;"

The "system" then amounts,
To making one department strain
To lift another, which, it's plain,
Might give the "Auditor" a pain
In his accounts.

Then, legislators, use your sense,
And push this patent system hence,

And give us back once more
The little schoolhouse on the hill,
Or down beside the cider mill,
And see that it is reddish still
With brownish door.

Restore the schools our fathers planned,
Give "number work" the bounce that's grand,

Make "language talks" taboo;
Let grammar cease to live in fear,
Let spelling gently hover near,
And mental 'rithmetic appear
And ciphering, too.

I'm told 'twas only here in May
Our "educators," under pay,
 Employed a college hall
And lunged such loads of highbrow guff,
And absolutely piffling stuff,
The janitor betongued 'em rough,
 High Priest and all.

And so, I say, we're awful fools,
We folks that went to district schools,
 With half our birthright gone,
To let these "docs" with fancy kits,
And more or less bewildered wits,
Reduce the other half to bits
 While we look on.

"RAISING A CHILD" IN VERMONT

HOW good the folks all used to be,
How good and kind to one another!
'Twas seldom that you'd ever see
A boy or girl without a mother;
For if the truly mother sped
Away to fill a loftier station,
Some friend stood sponsor for the dead
And kept intact the dear relation.

Your grandpa's folks, you're proud to own,
Brought up some boy the spotted fever,
Or canker rash left all alone—
I used to hear how Milo Seaver
When four years old lost all his kin,
His father, mother, brother, sister,
But Deacon Densmore took him in
And kept him till his name was "Mister."

'Most everybody raised a child
That had no special claim to favor;
They didn't let a boy run wild,
A girl had friends enough to save her:
That lad that Uncle Paul* espoused,
The little Matt—in manhood, later,
The nation's Senate charmed and roused
And early hardships made him greater.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

But now you can't get near your work
Unless you pass some tall asylum,
So full of kids it takes a clerk
To index up their cards and file 'em;
They wait like little soldiers there,
But oft in vain, for home promotion;
Their wistful eyes for foster care
And foster love bespeak devotion.

I'd rather wear a rag-cloth blouse
And have my shoes a trifle dirty,
Than live in some great Gothic house
And jest be "Orphan Number Thirty";
I'd rather have some farmer's wife
A-tell me, "Fetch the kindling, Charlie,"
Than be fenced in for half my life
And never have no soup but barley.

The war, may be, will do us good
And make us less parured and pelfish;
We'd all be thankful if it would,
We'd rather all be nice than selfish;
But too much salaried system, p'r'aps,
Too many letters "dic" and formal,
Have pushed the children from our laps
And warped us from the Christian normal.

*Governor Paul Dillingham brought up Matt H. Carpenter, who became a United States Senator from Wisconsin.

LOOKING OVER VERMONT TOWN REPORTS

ALONG before Marchmeeting day,
For towards a month or so, I'd say,
While yet the ground is solid white
And not a robin's song in sight;
While yet the snow contraptions stand
Upon the Propagation land;
You're apt to notice anywheres,
Around behind the Grange Hall stairs,
In blacksmith shop, or store backroom,
Or any place of public gloom,
A nice old bunch of nice old sports
A-going through the Town Reports.

If you're a boy whose ear is spry,
And don't let on, and slip up sly,
The Overseer's account you'll hear
Discussed like this, or very near:
"Paid, pair of crutches, Pat McKim;
One crutch has always done for him:
Paid, care and nursing, Jacob Greif;
That Hun has got a husky wife:
Paid, Pittsburg stogies, Joe Larue;
'Twould cost us less if Joe would chew:"—
Oh! they could practice 'round the courts,
Them tops that search the Town Reports.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

"Paid, funeral sermon, Reverend Gas;
We'll bet 'twas what they call a mass:
Paid, pain-reliever, Huldah Dake;
She's full of morphine, let her ache:
Paid, hearse and horse for William Brown;
How's that? we've got a hearse in town:
Paid, doctor twice, Belindy Snell;
That's tough on us, she can't get well:
Paid, lodging tramps and 'phone at Cramp's;
That's rich, a telephone for tramps:"—
They're surely wise, that bunch of sports
That sets and searches Town Reports.

The Road Commishner next receives
These raps and straps to grace his sleeves:
"Paid, extry shoveling, sixty days;
Some shoveler that, old one-armed Hayes:
Paid, winter road and day's expense;
Oh! yes; he moved two lengths of fence:
Paid, brush and stone for Slipback Hill;
That's so's to keep 'er slipping still:
Paid, Georgia pine for culvert beams;
He'd better bought some chocolate creams:"—
They sure could practice 'round the courts,
Them tops that search the Town Reports.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And so they go, straight up and down,
Through every officer in town;
No certified accountant lives
Whose art such "special service" gives;
They know each itemed line they score
And what it's been for years before;
They know a first selectman's charge
In second lister would be large:
Oh! there be folks for every part,
And wartime doesn't change the heart;
There's them that fight and man the forts,
And them that search the Town Reports.

BOILING SAP AT NIGHT IN VERMONT

OUR sugarhouse was jest a shack,
Shacked up "regardless," bit by bit;
Sed parva apta est, is how

A scholar might have spoke of it;
The "arch" was bluestone set in clay
Without a draft or door in sight—
But say; 'twas fun to boil all day
And extry fun to boil at night.

Each time before we built the fire
We boys would take an iron bar,
Retrue the arch, reset the pan,
And pry the kettle up to par;
And then we'd slather on the clay
To make the thing combustion tight—
And say; 'twas fun to boil all day
And extry fun to boil all night.

There'd be a backfire now and then—
Most chimbls have to sneeze and cough—
And there was settlings more or less,
Of course, each time we syrupe off;
But wan't that syrup good and sweet,
Not zoomy gray or sickly white,
And wan't it elegant to eat
That syrup syrupe off at night!

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

We fired with hemlock dry as bone,
And there was floating sparks, no doubt,
But always after every run
We scoured the pan and kettle out;
Soft soap and sand—a Yankee pair—
Would make 'em both look pretty bright,
And all us boys, we combed our hair
Before we went to work at night.

However, 'twan't no science plant,
No prophylactic tub or plug
Or ox or ass was 'round the place,
Or Listerated jug or mug;
But wan't that syrup good and brown,
It looked the part, it tasted "right"—
I've never seen a can in town
Like that we syruped off at night.

Our sugarhouse was jest a shack,
Shacked up Si Briggs way, bit by bit;
Sed parva apta est, is how
The preacher might have spoke of it;
No zinc "containers" 'round it stood,
No 'vaperator was in sight,
But wan't that syrup sweet and good—
That syrup made at dead of night!

MAKING SOAP IN VERMONT

LAST Thursday, down by Slipshod Hill,
Jest south of Waterburyville,
There where the talc teams ebb and flow
With loads of steatitic snow—
The stuff that seems to take the place
Of water on a school girl's face,
Enough of which is dug and ground
Each year to fill Long Island Sound—
I saw a sight of health and hope,
To wit: a farmer making soap.

As quick as any duck can quack
My saponaceous days came back;
Old times uprose before my eye
And I was lost in thought and lye;
Again I felt the call to preach
I had when cleaning out the leach;
Again I longed to "fire" a train,
As when the soap was "right" to strain—
But why in Memory's backroom mope?
Let's get to work and make some soap.

The leach cleaned out and contents sowed
Upon the knoll there, next the road,
The winter ashes forth we brought
From here and there, and what a lot!

Each thing of iron, brass or tin
Was full as you could jam 'em in;
I've seen a pretty decent churn
Obliged to do a storage turn—
You see, a farmer has to cope
With forty things, a-making soap.

Then next we fellers had to bring
The water from the orchard spring;
Five trips a day, two pails a trip,
We fetched before the lye would drip;
Then six big pails for two days more,
Until it run three streams or four;
By then that lye could almost speak,
Beside it liquid fire is weak,
And when 'twould eat a piece of rope
We knew 'twas time to make the soap.

The mother 'gredients then we'd get
From out the woodhouse, where they set;
The ham stubs, knuckles, bacon rinds,
And bones and bits of many kinds;
Perhaps some headcheese, turning strong,
Or sassage that had lived too long;
All these within the cauldron fell
With hopes the fairies wished us well,
For powers beyond our mortal scope
Preside o'er mayonnaise and soap.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

We next lit up the fire and stood
Around and "stirred" and knocked on wood;
We had a special rakestail hoe
With which to start an undertow,
And when the mess boiled up *en masse*
It looked as rich as Roman glass;
We'd cross our fingers then for fun
For who can tell when soap is done!
You've kinder got to guess and grope
And talk mysterious, making soap.

The straining basket then we took
A-down from off the girder hook,
The sides a-nothing much but slits,
The bottom gone and et to bits,
And stuffed it full of "hay and grain"
And then all hands commenced to strain;
We filled the old wood pails up good,
And lugged 'em where the soaptank stood,
And then with spinal cords aslope
We emptied in the fresh-laid soap.

But when that soap was ripe and dry
No Dutchman's cleanser need apply;
It only took one dishcloth swish
To purify the oatmeal dish;
The great big bubbles made of suds
Threw rainbows off, like diamond studs;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

To clean a cut or stop a bruise,
There wan't no likelier thing to use—
'Twas worth the pains, 'twas health and hope
To make and own a tub of soap.

THE LAST OF MAY IN VERMONT

PLANTIN' time's already here
And will soon be gone;
Hoein' time will soon appear
As the year rolls on;
Soon, before we know it, 'most,
Hayin' days will dawn.

See the farmer on his land—
Doesn't look so glum;
See him swing his broadcast hand—
Knows the seed will "come:"
Earth is sayin' things to him
And he isn't dumb.

Fog and rain and sun and air
Are a-helpin' all;
Whether it is foul or fair,
Whether Spring or Fall,
Seems as though a hidden force
Answers back his call.

Happy farmer—happy days—
Waitin' Autumn's yield;
Doin' what his conscience says
In his little field;
Happier he than hero dead
Borne upon his shield.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Hoein' time is pretty near—
Scumble out the hoes;
Hayin' time will soon be here
As the grinstone knows;
Then will come the harvest home,
Then the Winter's snows.

Ain't it great and ain't it fine
How the seasons roll!
Earth a reg'lar melon mine
Under man's control—
Hope nobody gains so much
As to lose his soul.

PLANTING CORN IN VERMONT

I LEARNT soon after I was born
To never use "old land" for corn;
And breaking up, as all men know,
Means ribs that crack and tears that flow;
So that, at last, when day is done
It's bed and arnica "for one"—
Thus ends the blue-eyed Maytime morn
When man goes forth to plant his corn.

Then next you harrow out of sight
The stone your plow has brought to light;
And then the harrow fails to hide
You stoneboat off and leave one side;
And there they lay the weeds beneath
To crack the cultivator teeth—
So ends another Maytime morn
That finds you bent on planting corn.

In deference to perfect art,
I'll skip the fertilizer part,
Except to note that as you veer
Towards home when noon and night are near,
You're apt to hear a voice once sweet
Exclaim, "Say, Johnson, scrape your feet"—
Your very boots are viewed with scorn
Because there's "uplift" under corn.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And then you furrow out the ground,
To keep the rows from straggling 'round;
You drive a horse that drags a "frame,"
And walk behind, unless you're lame;
A pretty piece of work is this,
It wouldn't hurt a husky Miss,
Yet, shout she might, "Oh! I was born
To vote, instead of furrow corn."

Your planting bag you nextly need,
Of ticken made, and filled with seed;
You tie it 'round you on the slant
And grab your hoe and start to plant;
Three days or more you work that hoe
In sight of chief-detective Crow—
It's one, two, three, from early morn,
Then back again, a-planting corn.

Then comes the day your field to line
And hang your scarecrows high and fine;
Old cowbells, bits of glass that glare,
Your Jim Blaine hat and aunt's back hair;
Some hoopskirts worn by Nell McClure,
And mushrat skins that wouldn't cure—
There's nothing 'twixt the Pole and Horn
That isn't used in planting corn.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

In 'bout a week, unless you fret,
The kernels sprout, if 't isn't wet;
Of course, there's spots that wouldn't "come"
If they was called with fife and drum;
Them spots you plant three times or more,
And four, I've heard, in Avery's Gore—
It's jest a little bit forlorn
The fourth time over, planting corn.

And then comes in your little joke
As you some seed in pizen soak,
And sow it broadcast, far and near,
Wherever raven tracks appear;
You know each crow will sure "get his"
As you rest up your rheumatiz,
And brag all 'round, with lofty scorn,
"No crows are working Johnson's corn."

"WORKING UP THE WOODPILE" IN VERMONT

I TRAVELED on the C. V. line

A hunderd miles the other day,
And farming sights was looking fine,
I thought, for 'round the first of May:
The woodpiles mostly took my eye—

A pile by every farmer's door—
And say; it made me want to go
And split some good old wood once more.

My mind went back to Joel King
And Joel's helper, Chuggy Cox:
They'd come around along towards Spring
And saw our wood-logs into blocks:
I thought I saw 'em 'tother day,
The way they looked in eighty-four,
And say; it made me want to go
And split some real old wood once more.

Joe's outfit was a "Gray & Son"—
The horsepower, track and dreadnought saw—
And how it rattled when it run!
The wheels would gee and then they'd haw:
At last a block would tumble off
And lodge upon the slushy floor—
It all came back the other day
And made me want to work once more.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Then Chug would kick the block way back,
And Joe would grab his levver quick
And roll the log along the track,
Jest right to make a stovelength stick;
And then the saw would start again—
I still can hear that horsepower roar—
And say; it starts me up to go
And split some good old wood once more.

I know what makes a beech block split
As easy as a euchre pack;
You want it icy where you hit
And then, By Gracious! how 'twill crack:
But you must notice where you stand
Or else your toe will wake up sore—
And yet I'd like to take a chance
To split some good old wood once more.

I recollect the splintery ash,
The tough-faced oak, the knotty birch,
And how one time I got a gash
That kept my instep home from church;
I recollect the sharp March wind,
The awful cowhide boots I wore,
The axe with stingy helve—and yet
I'd like to split some wood once more.

THE "TRUE VERMONTER"

'TIS said the true Vermonter's gait
Announces him in every state,
And that his language, dried and droll,
"Proclaims the man" from pole to pole;
The trait, however, that precedes
All other inbred streaks and leads,
Is nothing either more or less
Than his ability to guess.

I've been in Merritt Amsden's store
And seen a man come in the door,
A perfect stranger, bent and browned,
And who I know had never found
His way to Felchville 'fore that hour,
By foot or any other power,
And yet, By Gum! old Pappy Hess,
Who set there, nailed him with a guess.

"I'll bet," said Pappy, "that's the son
Of old man Jeremiah Munn;
I've heard that when he lived in Burke
He had a boy who wouldn't work
And run away to sea, and say;
That stranger's nose and clothes and way
The Munn idee to me express;
He's Jerry's chicken—that's my guess."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I've seen old Doctor Scott go by
So fast his gig wheels blurred your eye,
And Aunt Janette would up and say,
"I b'lieve he's heading Hartford way;
The governor sometimes has a spell
In June of not digesting well,
And Scott is good in 'cute distress;
That's what's a-happening—that's my guess."

I've seen Blind French, the market man,
A yoke of cattle girth and span,
Then kinder pat 'em on the flanks
And run his fingers down their shanks,
And then step back about a yard,
And say while he was chewing hard,
"You want to know how much they'll dress?
I'll tell you—but 'twon't be no guess."

I've seen a city splurge come back
And buy a farm all out of whack,
"Restore" the house, rebuild the barn,
And use up cash like Red Cross yarn;
I've also seen my grandma Shedd
Adjust her apern as she said,
"There's sech a thing as spendthriftness—
The town will board him yet, I guess."

And Pappy, Aunt and French and she
Was jest as right as they could be;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The runaway on sight was bagged,
The doctor's patient truly tagged;
The cattle had no more to say,
And Springfield laid The Splurge away—
The true Vermonter, I profess,
Is Thunderation on a guess.

"HAYING THE OATS" IN VERMONT

BEFORE the silos come to stay
And cattle had to have their porridge,
We skinned the cat another way
Around West Hartford, there, and Norwich,
For when we thought we'd give the stock
Some special shiny winter coats,
Instead of brewing silo bock
We went to work and hayed the oats.

It didn't take no fans nor wheels.
No silo sergeant come and figured,
But Uncle Dyer jest rapped his heels
And said, "By Golly! I'll be jiggered
Our barnyard friends deserve a treat,
They've got tremendous lengthy throats,
Let's give 'em something good to eat—
I motion that we hay the oats."

And so along the second week
Of haying, we jest left the medder
To stay right there each side the creek,
And housed the mower, rake and tedder,
And bought a brand new scythe and snath,
And hired old lying Cap'n Coats,
And started in to hew a path
Three menfolks deep right through the oats.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The way them billhooks used to snap
 Would show our "manhood" wasn't shackled;
Unc took the lead and then come Cap,
 A-lieing every breath he tackled;
It wouldn't stopped him though the skies
 Had dropt their bulls and bears and goats,
And, Honest Injun! say; them lies
 They kinder helped to hay the oats.

Such tumbles! big as General Joffre:
 It took the stags to do the hauling,
And when a whaling load slid off
 You didn't hear no tears a-falling;
We tossed 'er back so quick, Great Scott!
 It stopt the neighbors taking notes—
It's Johnny-on-the-special-Spot
 When once you start to hay your oats.

We filled the big bent highbeams deep
 So we could feed in each direction,
And not a colt or calf or sheep
 Or yearling ever made objection;
The cows give all the milk they could,
 We saved the corn to shove the shoats,
The plan, I Snum! worked mighty good—
 Jest try it, neighbor, hay your oats.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT SERVICE
FLAG—FIVE HUNDRED SEVEN-
TEEN STARS**

IT surely does you good
 When walking up "The Hill,"
To see five hundred stars
 Beclustered on "The Mill;"
It shows the boys are true
 To great traditions still.

It rather mists your eyes,
 But makes your heart rejoice,
To know the boys have heard
 The Macedonian voice,
And, like their loyal sires,
 Have made the lofty choice.

To hold the Hunnish hosts,
 To rescue stranger lands,
To loosen millions bound
 By Prussian bars and bands,
Are acts like those that fall
 With joy from heavenly hands.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

All blue those stars today
 Though some will change to gold,
But be they gold or blue
 No star is dim or cold,
Nor sets except to sink
 Within the banner's fold.

Devotion, courage, faith,
 Resolve that scorns to lag,
Are visualized to us
 Upon this Service Flag—
Possessions that shall pass
 No more than Mansfield's crag.

Beloved and old "Vermont"
 Enseated on "The Hill:"
We cheer the stainless stars
 That glorify "The Mill;"
We know your gallant sons
 Will guard your honor still.

CUTTING CORN IN VERMONT

THE farmer "moves right up the line"

Through years of silly city scorn;
He plants new kinds of citron vine,
Invents new ways of scalding brine
And brand new ways of cutting corn;
I'd like to make this last my text,
For corn is "cut" in theory still,
And tell how grandpa used a "horse"
While father "set around the hill."

That "horse" was sure a noble nag—

A sapling spruce, with two ash legs
Stuck through the butt; you'd set a jag
Of hills around it, then you'd drag
The pole along a dozen pegs;
It didn't have no wheels or gears,
No oil can that you had to fill,
And thousands used it till one day
Some sun-soul "set around the hill."

I've heard our forbears further back

Would take a sickle and—ker-slash,
The corn fell right and left, ker-whack;
And then they'd armful-up a stack
Which soon the wind tore all to smash;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

They couldn't build a "standard" stook,
The kind that gives your eye a thrill,
They never, likely, saw a "horse"
Or dreamt of "setting 'round the hill."

And now the harvesting machine
Runs through the "maize lands," under power;
The great red dragon with his keen,
And noisy teeth bites off the green
Frumentum—miles of it per hour;
Your crop gets cut, but there it lays,
Like scantling, scattered 'round a mill;
The dragon can't horse-up a stook,
Nor, Mercy Me! "set 'round the hill."

How smart a hand-cut cornfield stands,
The stookums all one size and height!
Their tops turned down inside the bands,
The bands composed of two good strands
Of wheatstraw, special-thrashed and bright;
That's farming—work laid out and done,
I call it agronomic skill,
It shows why grandpa used a "horse"
And father "set around the hill."

Such fodder as our folks would get
From them bright bundles every year!

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The sheep and yearlings used to set
Their muzzles into it and let
 No other business interfere;
I never heard that strange word "orts"
 Till I was big as Uncle Bill—
It's plain why grandpa used a "horse"
 And father "set around the hill."

I'm not discussing silo feed,
 But corn, real corn, the kind you husk;
The kind that meets a porker's need,
The long-eared kind you save for seed,
 The kind it's fun to roast at dusk;
Yes; that's the kind I used to cut—
 I see my shiny cutter still—
Once more I'm back by grandpa's "horse"
 And "set," with father, "'round the hill."

CLEANING OUT THE SULLER IN VERMONT

THE time to clean the suller out
Is May or June, or later—
July or August—anytime
It pleases "Mrs. Slater;"
You'd better do it when her soul
Reflects a rosy color,
For it's a family affair,
This cleaning out the suller.

It ain't so much the weary work
As 'tis the strain and tension;
Each time you drop a jelly jar
You feel an apprehension;
Each time the piccalilli spills
You turn a different color—
Oh! it's too much for flesh and blood,
Almost, to clean a suller.

You're glad the man that built the house
Failed up without a dollar;
He run the suller dreen up-hill
Instead of towards the holler;
Of all the dull-head sons of men
No head was ever duller—
You've got to bail and mop as well
As sweep and dust your suller.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Your broom against the walls and joice
Rips out the frost-killed mortar;
The dry-rot dust comes down so fast
Your breath gets short and shorter;
It loads your eyelids till you look
As sad as Maudie Muller—
Alas! that error-hounded man
Should have to clean a suller.

Oh! how you hate to touch that bin
Of withered old potatoes;
Your views on sprouting ain't the same,
At all, as "Mrs. Slater's;"
You'd like to have it understood
You're not a murphy huller;
She thinks you'd better sprout them spuds,
Before you leave the suller.

There's beet and turnip dirt enough
To fill a bushel basket;
And everywhere a barrel stood
You find a dusty gasket;
The brine drops on the corn beef tub
Are all you see of color—
It's sure an apoplectic job
A-cleaning out the suller.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

But when you've done and finished up—
The crocks and firkins mated,
The benches washed, the winders sloshed,
The rat trap set and baited,
It smells so sweet you go up stairs
And eat a fresh-fried cruller,
And say, "Now, mother, let's be friends,
It's pretty clean down sullen."

A VERMONT AUCTIONEER

WHENE'ER an auction bill I see
On barn or hayscales, bridge or tree,
Or stuck outside the village store,
Or tacked against the gristmill door—
I wonder if the auction game
Is played the same, or 'bout the same,
As in those days of youthful cheer
When Albert Burk was auctioneer.

His righthand eye had quite an ail,
But he could see enough to nail
The nod or wink or shoulder-shrug
That sold the fambly pung or plug;
The only time he lost a bid
Was when he stopped to shift his quid;
If he was living now and here,
The wise would say, "Some auctioneer!"

It took a man to act as clerk
When stuff was auctioned off by Burk;
I've seen him sell a farm and stock
And get all through by two o'clock;
One time he sold for mason Flower
Jest sixty things in jest an hour;
He always run on topnotch gear,
Al Burk, my boyhood's auctioneer.

He'd hold a bedpost up and say,
"Now ladies, kindly step this way—
I'll bet you all a pound of gum
No wingless beast has ever come
Within a mile, yes; call it two,
Of this fine bed I'll sell to you;
My word, it doesn't go too dear,
Bid up and help the auctioneer."

What'er he tried to sell he sold,
He turned some awful truck to gold;
The things that wouldn't "leave the shelf,"
He made a bluff to buy himself,
And when he sold a widder out
His pay was only half, about;
The Universlists far and near
Was proud of Burk, the auctioneer.

He taught Hank White his merry trade
And so his own successor made;
Each year his fame, a rising tide,
Embraced new towns on every side;
'Tis said that as his end drew on
They heard him whisper, "Going, Gone!"
Thus *sans reproche* and void of fear
He lived and died an auctioneer.

MENDING BRUSH FENCE IN VERMONT

WHEN in the Spring the cattle moo
And try to buck the barnyard wall,
The farmer has a thing to do
He doesn't like to do at all;
He knows that over in the swamp,
Where undergrowth and skeets are dense,
He's got about a dozen rods
Of old brush fence.

He knows that fence is pancake-flat,
And that to resurrect it so
A flock of steers will halt thereat,
He's got to live a day of woe;
He knows he's got to go himself,
And furnish time and tools and sense—
No hired man on earth can fix
An old brush fence.

He dreads it jest about a week
And then he gets the grace he lacks;
His soul with purpose springs aleak,
And up he jumps and hunts an axe;
He's lively as an active verb,
First person, singular, present tense—
He vows he'll fix that fence that day:
Confound that Fence!

He slings a harness onto Joe,
And grabs a whippetree and chain,
And hurries towards the *locus quo*
And then, By George! it starts to rain;
He looks around and calls the dog
To give his courage confidence—
A whole-souled dog is quite a help
At fixing fence.

And first he slays an aged ash
From which to carve for instant use
A mess of stakes, when crash on crash,
She lodges halfway up a spruce;
He hitches on to snake 'er down,
And snaps both tugs in consequence—
He's two-thirds mad and one-third riled:
Gol Darn that Fence!

At last he gets his stakes and starts
To drive 'em—hear that foggy thud—
But every blow with which he parts
Jest sinks him deeper in the mud;
He “drives” himself and not the stakes,
And cries with mournful eloquence—
“Why don't Dean Hills get up a way
To fix brush fence?”

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

He nextly cuts great loads of birch,
Scrub shoemake, hemlock, brush and brakes,
And drags 'em with a lifting lurch
And sticks 'em on the dewy stakes;
It's growing dark, he's had no lunch,
He finds the day's bright recompense
Is, that he's fixed about three rods
Of that old fence.

THE VERMONT "HIRED MAN"

THE hired man we knew of yore
Deserves to come to life once more;
Deserves, although the nations rage,
To step again upon the stage
And show, if not his knightly grace,
His kinship with the human race:
'Twould seem 'twere well jest now to scan
The fast receding hired man.

In youth I met along my way
A dozen hired men a day;
I've seen him hunted up and hired,
I've seen him fussed at, fit and fired;
I've seen him rise to some renown
And get to represent the town;
The Strafford Free Will Church began
Through preaching by a hired man.

With him I've wheeled the woodpile in
And fished where fish was awful thin;
I knew his boots, I knew his cough,
I've touched the pay that payed him off;
I have a diary that he kept
And own a bed on which he slept,
The which, now scraped of much japan,
Would quite enrich that hired man.

I've also seen him disappear
What time the sheriff's gig drew near;
I've went with dad that very night
Beyond the woods and left a light,
A loaf of bread and dollar bill,
Where he, perhaps, was hiding still;
But no; he scorned our helpful plan—
He cooked a sheep, that hired man.

But most of them was straight and neat
And paid their bills and scraped their feet;
One used to even wash the eggs,
One dusted off the grinstone legs;
Two tracked acrost the kitchen floor,
Two should have helped the old folks more,
Three owned a colt and one a span—
You see I've seen a hired man.

One day I read a book that told
About the Norman knights of old,
And next day when we cut the swale
I tipped the hired man the tale;
"The Normans!" said he, "Oh! get out,
You mean the Mormans past a doubt—
Old Brigham Young and all his clan—
A bad book," said the hired man.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And though we had our troubles then
We should have pensioned hired men;
I asked a Chink to-day jest how
He'd go to work to milk a cow,
And quick as morphine he replied,
"To milkum cow me get inside:"
'Tis well, indeed, at times to scan
The past and present hired man.

OUR OLD VERMONT PARLOR-ROOM

OF tiptoeing through our parlor-room
Of late I often dream;
I see the waxwork flowers a-bloom,
The hanging lamp agleam;
The whatnot still uplifts its head
In polished self-esteem.

The table with the top a-hinge
Is next the closet door;
The mats upon the zinc impinge
And cover half the floor;
I notice where the carpet shows,
It scarcely hasn't wore.

The stove, with burnished tube above
And moulded box below,
With maple chunks is still in love,
As in the long-ago;
I hear the roaring up the flue,
I see the hearth aglow.

The haircloth chairs and sofa still
Are where they used to stand;
The picture of an English rill,
With sheep on either hand,
Is hanging near the highboy there
A-jest as grandma planned.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I move a motto frame to see
A-how the paper wears;
It hasn't faded—seems to me,
Except the pinkish squares;
The ceiling still is white enough
A-so the whitewash stares.

And here is where the preacher stood
Upon that dismal day,
Of widowhood and orphanhood
And teams in long array;
His mournful voice dissolves the dream—
I tiptoe fast away.

A VERMONT CHICKEN BUYER

WHEN stronger grew November's cold
And Boreas used to bellow,
There never failed to come along
Another breezy fellow;
He wore his hair like Walter Scott,
His whiskers much like Dickens—
Was he an author? He was not,
He used to buy our chickens.

You should have seen him anytime
When he was 'round a-buying,
He'd reach right up inside the air
And catch a chicken flying;
And as I hear the piercing squawk
The air with feathers thickens—
It took a lot of squawk and talk
To buy our folkses' chickens.

He'd hold a big raw rooster up
And blow all through the feathers—
I see him blow, I feel the fuzz
That on his mustash gathers;
And then he'd growl, "They ain't quite ripe,
Good corn the white meat thickens,
Jest give 'em anything but tripe—
I want the choicest chickens."

He went to Boston every Fall
A week before Thanksgiving,
And sold the frozen birds he'd bought
When they was warm and living;
He rode inside the red caboose
Along with drover Pickens,
And you jest bet he jest cut loose
With half a car of chickens.

'Twas great to see him "taking in"
This side the railroad station;
He'd thumb a pullet to the point
Of exarticulation,
Then holler "Foul!" and sling the bird,
It surely beat the Dickens,
You'd think that he was playing third
Instead of packing chickens.

Each year before he started trade
He borrowed fifty dollars
Of grandpa Tripp, to get up steam—
Of course you know what follers,
For when he said, "I can't pay back,"
Then grandpa's language quickens;
Says he, "You'll lose your homestead, Jack,
A-buying folkses' chickens."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

We used to watch his face come home
From Boston—if 'twas sunny
We knew that he had likely made
A rattling pile of money;
I still can see his eyebrows dance,
Or else the frown that thickens—
He played the game and took his chance
With other chaps and chickens.

VERMONT "TAVERN STANDS"

I HOPE our quaint old tavern stands
Will keep right on a-standing,
And grace the state from Bennington
Clear up to Barton Landing;
They represent the former days
When common folks were grand—
No sight that Old Vermont displays
Can beat a Tavern Stand.

You find 'em on the ancient roads
That now are thundering highways,
Or, victimized by "straightening plans,"
They beautify the byways;
Those red brick structures, stately, square,
The mansions of the land—
There's really nothing, I declare,
That beats a Tavern Stand.

They rose before the elegance
That marked the Georgian era
Was lost in queerish gingerbread,
Or concrete stuff that's queerer;
The building boss had worn a blouse
Before he took command,
And he could build a meetinghouse
As well as Tavern Stand.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

They mostly had a wooden ell,
With barns and stable ample,
And just inside, a sample room
With Medford goods to sample;
The traveler saw no bellhops hop,
He heard no foreign band,
But, just the same, he liked to stop
Before a Tavern Stand.

The landlord, he was always 'round
To give his guests a greeting;
He spoke their names and shook their hands
And made a merry meeting;
And then they entered up the walk,
With dahlias on each hand—
Oh! I could string a mile of talk
About a Tavern Stand.

The broad high chimneys, stretching up,
Today look strong and solid;
The pattern 'round the entrance door
Makes modern doors look squalid;
It's great to sight 'em as you ride,
You feel your heart expand,
I always raise my cap with pride
Before a Tavern Stand.

RAISING HUBBARD SQUASH IN VERMONT

IF we could only spin a top
And make a wish and get a crop,
The things that I'm about to say
Would then be told another way;
For crops there be so hard to cinch
You couldn't raise 'em with a winch—
It's all I want to do, By Gosh!
To raise a head of Hubbard squash.

Who Hubbard was, I do not know,
Nor why he used his country so;
Considering his great repute
There should be ways to raise his fruit;
For think of all the wives he's grieved,
And all the married men he's peeved—
The spirit slumps like steers in slosh
At jest the name of Hubbard squash.

From that sad day you plant the seed
To Mr. Cutworm's earliest feed;
From Mr. Cutworm's latest eat
To Mr. Bug's first fambly treat;
From Mr. Bug's last meal to frost,
It's labor, love and phosphate lost—
There seems to be no wipe or wash
That disembugs a Hubbard squash.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And if by grace of Pan or Puck,
Or happy chance or splendid luck,
You get a real nice fruit in shape
To praise and pick and cook and scrape,
You'll find the vine has straggled 'round
And grown it on your neighbor's ground,
And all you get is jest a josh
As off he lugs your Hubbard squash.

How strange that we in squashdom prize
The things we in ourselves despise!
Who wants, unless he's sunk in sin,
A green or orange-colored skin?
Or warts that stand a half inch high,
Or "flesh" that's classed as "cool and dry"?
I'll bet some scamp like Jock McCosh
Bred up and named the Hubbard squash.

It's sure a shame a fruit so fine
Should have to grow upon a vine,
And lay around in dust and dirt,
And be bedosed with insect squirt;
A fruit that you can boil or bake
And even use in layer cake—
But what's the use? this talk is bosh
Till I can raise a Hubbard squash.

DIGGING POTATERS IN VERMONT

OF course, you'll pick the dustiest day
There's been since planting time in May,
And, as from out the shed you start,
To haul the old red dumpty cart,
It hooks against the old green pung,
Which falls and snaps the tedder tongue;
And then you stop and hunt around,
For Mr. Tailboard can't be found;
And then you stop and dust the seat,
For Mrs. Hen is not so neat;
And then you start, no more to stop,
Until your cart adjoins your crop.

But jest as digging hours begin
The boys commence to act like sin;
It's hard to make 'em shake the tops
Until the last potato drops;
And some they maul and some they mash,
And every good one gets a gash;
And next they pelt the old stone walls,
Like Thunder, with potato balls;
And picking up they more than hate,
Unless it's getting noon or late,
And jest to show they're awful smart
They toss a snake inside the cart.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

By four o'clock the load's abeam
And Johnny goes and gets the team;
You brace your feet and take the reins,
The neckyoke bumps, the evener strains,
The forrard wheels go up in air,
The hind wheels stay exactly "there;"
At last the combination works,
The big load moves with little jerks;
The basketfuls you've set on top
Bejiggle 'round till off they drop;
A punkin that you stop and pick
Along the way looks green and sick.

At last you reach the bulkhead door,
And back and gee and back some more,
But when you start the cart to tip
She tips too much and gives a slip,
And down she comes, ker-smash, and splits
The bulkhead casing all to bits;
The murphies make a Hun retreat
And land beneath the horses' feet:
Behold your cart of old renown,
The tongue in air, the tailboard down!
The boys jump 'round and slap their shins,
The hired man, he kinder grins.

But don't indulge in deep dismay,
The system works the second day;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The boys behave, the yield is good,
The hired man laughs when he should;
Eight loads you get of spudlings fine,
And one of small, and that makes nine;
There's nothing more to do or say
But put the old dumpcart away,
And sigh because you lost the load
You sold that German, Bumbletoad;
And then you seek the piller slips
And dream of Saratoga chips.

VACATION HINTS FOR YOUNG VERMONTERS

HO! all you young Vermonters
That city life pursue—
What know you of the country life
Your daddies came up through,
Or of the rural simplex world
Your mothers slipped into?

You girls have been a-wearing silks
Your whole glad earthly way;
Your mothers wore their first silk gowns
Upon their wedding day;
You boys have had more clothes and things
Than my old pen can say.

You've lived your pretty, townish lives
At home, at play, at school;
You've had your time for basketball
And "hearts" and parlor pool;
You've only had to touch a spring
If you was warm or cool.

But you have never seen a loon
Enjoy a one-legged nap;
You've never had your sapyoke slip
And spill two pails of sap;
You've never peeled a hemlock log
Or set a woodchuck trap.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

You've never heard an adder hiss,
Or seen a weasel dart;
You've never followed up a stream
To find its baby start;
You've never smoked a raccoon out
Unless you're extry smart.

You've never watched a hedgehog hedge,
Or a flying squirrel fly;
You've never seen a "cradle" trim
The sandy-bearded rye,
Or heard the catbird's morning call
Or bobcat's midnight cry.

You've never helped to stone a well
With big encaustic tile;
You've never owned a hunting knife
That once was jest a file;
You've never found a gensing root
And cracked a dollar smile.

You've never seen 'em pluck a goose,
Or hold a nanny's feet
That wouldn't own her tiny lamb,
So that the lamb could eat;
You've never helped to stir the soap
Or cure the shoulder meat.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Ho! all you young Vermonters—
The city life is thin;
Get out into the hinterland
Where 'portant things begin;
Get out—see, hear, taste, touch and smell
The state you're living in.

HOW BARRE, VERMONT, WAS NAMED

Vide Thompson's "Vermont," Part III, page 9.

I WONDER if you've ever heard
How Barre got its name,
But if I swear in telling you
I'm not the one to blame;
For this is quite an ancient tale,
And when the state was young
The folks, they wore but little jade
And spoke with freer tongue.

The town at first was Wildersburgh,
But when the settlers came
In good-sized lumps, they soon desired
To pick a prettier name;
And so they met at Calvin Smith's
To see about the change,
And choose a word of loftier pitch
And more romantic range.

One said that "Paris" filled the mouth,
Another said it seemed
That "Newburn" was the kind of name
O'er which he'd droiled and dreamed;
But Cap'n Thomson said, "Get out;
From Holden's hills I came;
I favor Holden first and last,
A Massachusetts name."

Then up spoke Mr. Sherman, there,
And said, "I, too, proclaim
I'd like to see this meeting choose
A good old Bay State name;
I hail from Barre, that's a word
To bring our town success;
'Twill make us famous, I'm convinced,
And wealthy, more or less."

"Get out," cried Thomson, "Go to grass;
That ain't no kind of name;"
And so the couple jawed and jawed
Until their jaws was lame;
The crowd was getting pretty tired
And soon commenced to shout,
"You fellers with such loads of lip,
Why don't you fight it out?"

Whereat they grinned and quickly 'greed
Acrost a pole to fight,
But if one knocked the other down,
Then any rules was right;
So off they went to Calvin's barn
To organize the game,
And started in to scrap for what
Is now a city's name.

Soon Thomson, with a fearful swing,
Laid out his rival clean,
And jumping on his prostrate form,
Began to bat his bean;
But Sherman dodged with great success,
And missing not his aim,
He ransacked Thomson's ribs as though
He had a world to name.

At last, with will and skill supreme,
He rolled the Holdenite,
And found himself a-top of one
Who showed no further fight;
Then springing up and standing high
Above his foeman's frame,
He shouted, "Barre, There, By ——!
Now Barre is the name."

"HAILING THE DOCTOR" IN VERMONT

IT wan't so very long ago
We'd hail old Doctor Blatter,
And ask him who it was 'twas sick
And what might be the matter;
Today we'd have to write a note
And send it on a platter—
It ain't nobody's business now
Who's sick or what's the matter.

We all could tell the doctor's nag
By her peculiar patter,
And so we'd hail him after dark
And he'd slow up and chatter;
He used to say he liked to stop,
It made old "Fan" keep fatter—
But now nobody knows who's sick,
Or if so, what's the matter.

To hail the doctor's car today
The strongest nerves would shatter;
We'd rather stand it as we are
Than be a whole lot flatter;
For if we got him stopt we'd have
The maddest kind of hatter—
He wouldn't tell us who was sick,
Or what might be the matter.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

We handle sick folks now as though
We'd trapped a dangerous satyr;
The 'phones get busy, then you hear
An awful bang and clatter;
A closed and guarded van bowls up,
The neighbors scoot and scatter,
And off it honks before you know
Who's sick or what's the matter.

And 'round the doctors, too, we find
The nurses thick as spatter;
Their great professional reserve
It's foolishness to batter;
Their business is to mind the "case"
And keep the doctor's data—
They ain't a-peddling who is sick
Or telling what's the matter.

There ain't much neighboring nowadays—
There ain't much friendly chatter—
There ain't no "watchers" now to guess
What ought to be the matter;
The nurses and internes bear sway,
And gone is Doctor Blatter—
It ain't nobody's business now
Who's sick or what's the matter.

**THE PROCTORSVILLE AND WINDSOR, VERMONT,
STAGE**

WHEN I was 'round the wide-eyed age,
And everything I saw a treat,
Joe Stickney used to drive the stage
From Proctorsville to Windsor Street;
Some stage, you bet, some driver, too,
He weighed, as near as I could guage,
About the same as either nag
That helped to haul his wondrous stage.

A real Rhode Island thorough-brace—
You bet, with driver's seat up high,
And underneath a kind of place
To chuck the mail and keep it dry;
The whole concern was painted up
Like some Maine weekly's Christmas page—
I've seen Napoleon's coach, but say,
It couldn't touch Joe Stickney's stage.

And Golly! how she rolled and pitched—
It made Nell Moody's feathers flop—
But when the nags was both unhitched
The neap stood up without a prop;
The big square rack stuck on behind
Would hold the Baptist parsonage,
And there was curtains at the doors—
You bet, it was a classy stage.

And say—the brake—we boys would point
That out to every kid galoot,
You know it had a “floating joint”
And went by either hand or foot;
And way on top a brass rail fence
Run ’round and made a baggage cage
For tony Massachusetts grips—
You bet, it was a dandy stage.

Oh! I forgot—I’m getting off—
Nell Moody was a country queen
That lived out near the watering trough
Jest where you turn for Woodstock Green;
She liked Joe’s horses, so she said,
And called one “Mike” and ’tother “Mage”—
Ed Gardner guessed she rode with Joe
To kinder “elevate the stage.”

When city boarder days begun,
You bet, ’twas velvet times for Joe;
He liked to see an ample run
Of summer shad from “down below;”
You’d s’pose all Boston knew his name,
And Joe for weeks was quite the rage—
’Twas “Mr. Stickney, How’s your health?”
And “Mr. Stickney, How’s your stage?”

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

No stop was made along his rout

Where Joe would snake the mail bag in,
He'd simply dump the dumb thing out

And grin a sort of Felchville grin;

But he'd go in himself, you bet,

And if the cheese in sight was sage,
He'd eat about a half a pound

And say, "Jest charge it 'ginst the stage."

Sometimes the teacher'd let us leave

Our seats as Joe's bright car drew nigh;
"Great Eastern," that's the name, I b'lieve,
The teacher used to call it by;

The strongest memory, though, that clings

Around that wondrous equipage,
Is seeing Hank White on in front—

You bet, he glorified that stage.

ADDISON COUNTY, VERMONT, CLAY

THE North Vermonter who would fain
The Equinox Hotel attain;
The South Vermonter, who, in turn,
Would see some Swanton powder burn;
The East Side habitant who tries
To view Vergennes before he dies,
Are each and all compelled to share
The same intensive wear and tear,
And cross, to their extreme dismay,
The Addisonian wastes of clay.

Each time my fliverette goes through
New Haven on the double skew,
Each time my touring chariot skids
Amongst the Dunmore dogs and kids,
Each time I stop to set a tire
In Middlebury's classic mire,
I ask myself, What in the deuce
Can be the town or county use,
The rhyme or reason, anyway,
For such a monstrous mess of clay?

And answers two have come to hand
Which absolute respect command;
The first one says, "These lofty hills,
Which give your motor man the chills,

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

These hills that make the soul recoil,
The spark plug swoon, the water boil,
Require to hold 'em where they b'long
An underpinning stiff and strong,
And nothing else will make 'em stay
In place but Addisonian clay."

The other says, "That when the snow
Makes up its April mind to go,
When runners scrape and sleds cut through,
And girls get red and "fellers" blue;
When Lincoln teams throw off their loads
And you'd be stuck on other roads,
This pasty blueness acts like grease
And slides you on your way in peace;
Your harness holds, your heart is gay—
You're saved by Addisonian clay!"

These reasons sort of disagree,
But either one will do for me;
For when I'm told a thing is so
It's all I ever want to know;
I now can slip and skip and slue
Through Weybridge and through Waltham, too,
And 'long the heights of Hancock hump,
In Bristol bump and Shoreham slump
And feel I'm favored all the way
In travelling over first-class clay.

PRE-TOWNMEETING TALK IN VERMONT

About a week before town meeting
You have a call from Deacon Plumb,
Who hands you out a gracious greeting,
Though usually he's pretty glum;
Says he, "I've called to get your feeling
About that culvert down by Blair's
And ask if you consider Kealing
The man to run our road affairs?"

"You know he stands right in with Tenney,
He's up for lister—him and Drew—
They'll tax us till we hain't a penny,
And this is real estate year, too;
We folks that live out here in Scrabble
Have got to kinder stick and hold,
Or else, By Gosh! that village rabble
Will build the roads of solid gold.

"It's fourteen year sense I was lister—
I ain't a-looking for it now—
But Tenney's jest a railroad twister,
And Drew, he isn't wuth his cow;
If we'll wake up I have an inkling
That now's the time to land our man;
We'll get a pretty decent sprinkling
Of village votes from Jim McAnn.

“There ain’t no very healthy reason,
Because he buys the railroad wood,
Why such a weathercock as Gleason
Should oversee the poor for good;
He’s got a long St. Albans letter
He’s showing ’round, with lots of airs,
That calls him straight, but we know better,
He’s crooked as the chamber stairs.

“Jake Sykes has writ a short petition
For me to make the lister run,
And here’s my names—good ammunition—
But shot and powder needs a gun;
You pop my name before the meeting,
If that’s your pleasure, neighbor Munn,
We’ll give that village gang a beating,
Or else, I Snum, it can’t be done.

“I ain’t a-asking any favors,
I never did and never do,
But we ain’t little bits of shavers
To be bossed ’round by dummy Drew;
We folks that live out here in Scrabble
Have got to kinder hold and stick,
Or else that village railroad rabble
Will make our wallets mighty sick.”

**OUR OLD CENTER-TOWN VERMONT
MEETINGHOUSE**

AROUND our Center Meetinghouse
There's nothing now that "centers,"
And Mr. Bat is jest about
The only soul that enters;
No boys between the sermons hold
A gingersnap carouse—
There ain't no sermons anymore
In Center Meetinghouse.

'Twas built to be a "Union Church,"
And said so on the gable,
But years ago the sign fell off
And stood in Bagley's stable;
A Poultney peddler bought the bell,
I think his name was Krause,
And faith and form have both forsook
The Center Meetinghouse.

The steps have gone, the blinds jest hang,
The weathervane is twisted;
The stoves with cobwebs, rust and dust
Are crusted and encysted;
The light the fathers lit with love
Their children dim and douse,
And where religion centered once
There's jest a Meetinghouse.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

It used to be a Town House, too,
And once, at Freeman's Meeting,
Old Deacon Stubbs give 'Squire Devoe
A pretty thorough beating;
They knocked the pulpit off its base,
The 'Squire, he lost his blouse,
And all the Piscopals marched out
And left the Meetinghouse.

At last they took the pews away
And oiled the floor for dancing;
And once I went, or should have went,
Except for Mary Lansing;
Then come some medium whose "control"
Was through a Hindu mouse—
That ended "services" within
The Center Meetinghouse.

I'm 'fraid our Center Meetinghouse
Is simply one of many,
And that where hill-town preaching throve
There isn't much of any;
The churches take to Main street now,
Like high-toned throats to grouse—
I hope they don't flat out as flat
As our poor Meetinghouse.

APRIL IN VERMONT

THE *ver purpureum* Horace loved
Is coming up the valleys;
The violet-colored Spring he sung
With Winter's coattails dallies;
We're ready for it any day
Up here at Jim McNally's.

We're glad the sun is running high
And paying earth attention;
He's going up like other things
Too numerous to mention;
There's nothing that's too low in Burke
But widder Plunkett's pension.

The cattle hook the barnyard fence,
The sheep are all a-bleating;
The colts, they stomp their straw and hay
And call for better eating;
The singing school has gone the way
Of that protracted meeting.

The barber leaves his door ajar,
The peanut cart is steaming;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The folks are planning seashore trips
That do the schoolhouse teaming;
The teachers hope to summer through
By eating grass and scheming.

The singing sparrow 'daps its throat
To pure Italian quavers;
The dandelion roots commence
To gather juicy flavors;
The alley kids begin to lick
The other little shavers.

The farmer men are working fast,
The farmerettes still faster;
They're looking into dirt and squirts,
The nitrate group and plaster;
By Fall they hope to be as rich
As her 'twas Mrs. Astor.

Depressing war has stopped at last
And everybody rallies;
It's great to see the violet Spring
A-creeping through the valleys;
We're ready for it any day
Up here at Jim McNally's.

THAT'S VERMONT

IF any stranger thinks Vermont
A place that goody-goodies haunt,
Where gusts and gales alike are sweet,
And flowers, as 'twere, pervade your feet;
Where trade is pure and undefiled
And folks are seldom rough or riled;
Where lovers stroll from knoll to knoll
And Matthew Arnold fills the soul;
Where deacons do their best to see
Nobody gets you up a tree;
Where people shrink from taking sides
And everybody, 'most, divides;
Where credit stretches out until
You "jump accounts" and pay your bill—
Jest let him move inside the state
And kinder fail to calculate;
Jest let him make a business slip,
And Boom! Bing! Bang! Wow! Wang! and Zip!

Before he knows jest where he's at
He's lost his wealth and health and hat;
His goods and merchandise are 'tached.
His headpiece and his honor scratched;
He's been so tongued and talked about
The Smart Street Church has thrown him out;
His lodge has warned him, and The Moose
Has hinted that he join The Goose;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

His wife perceives the neighbors glum,
The butcher and his boy are dumb;
The hired girl declines to stay,
The dog and cat have run away;
They have it 'round his daughter, Fan,
Crocheted a scarf for Appelman,
And that his son, by courthouse rule,
Is boarding at the Brandon school—
Let not your business footsteps trip,
Or Boom! Bing! Bang! Wow! Wang! and Zip!

But 't isn't difficult to steer
So that these sounds avoid your ear;
I only mean and wish to say
That business goes the usual way;
Vermonters pay their debts and want
What's coming to 'em—that's Vermont;
And he whose reputat is fair,
Who lives and labors on the square,
Will find no notice on his door,
Nor hear the legal lion roar;
He'll shun the termination "or"
And cease to be a mortgagor;
He'll court that happy suffix "ee"
And make his moves as mortgagee;
He'll buy no more when paying ends
And keep his butcher, dog and friends,
He'll strike a careful, cautious clip,
Or Boom! Bing! Bang! Wow! Wang! and Zip!

GETTING UP THE WINTER WOOD IN VERMONT

I'VE heard a dozen farmers say
They'd rather cut and cart their hay,
In any season, bad or good,
Than chop and haul their winter's wood.
With all our tools, it's quite a chore
To lug a tree a mile or more;
It takes a lot of knocks and nerve,
A lot of vigor, vim and verve,
To move against a maple grove
And make it fit the kitchen stove.

These woodlot antics first begin
By what is known as "breaking in;"
You'd better likely use the stags,
They sorter like the snow and snags;
You Whoa Hush 'round jest where you please,
And gee and haw amongst the trees,
And them you kinder guess you'll cut
You look at sharp from branch to butt—
You can't set down and chew a clove
And let your wood hunt up your stove.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Your hired man has worked his time,
And so you send for Jonas Prime
To help you chop; but Jone can't come,
He's got a felon on his thumb;
You have to hire that little chap
That some call "Poly," others "Nap;"
"Slim help," you say, "his three pound axe
Can deal but few and feeble whacks"—
How drab your thoughts, a murky drove,
You wish you'd never owned a stove!

Next day as you and Poly go
To strike the pre-initial blow,
You notice that he's got a bit
And fuse and candy in his kit;
You single out a big old tree
And say, "Go to it; one, two, three;"
Then Poly makes his bitstock spin,
And sticks a stick of candy in,
And then a noise, as though your grove
Had lit on top the kitchen stove.

Before the sun has left the sky
He's leveled half your year's supply;
You're pleased to death and up and say
You'll pay him all he asks per day,

RYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

But thus he lays you on the shelf—
“Me chop par cord and eat maself;”
“All right,” you shout, as Poly scores,
And off you start to do the chores,
A-guessing out how Frenchmen throve
In days before the kitchen stove.

You get along with Poly fine,
Like Zeus, his actions show design;
It sometimes makes your wallet thump
The way he “cords” around a stump;
It ruther tires your measuring nerve
To have to measure 'round a curve,
But anyway, you've conquered Time
And sled-length wood and Jonas Prime—
How bright your thoughts, a comely drove,
You wish you owned another stove!

HARVEST TIME IN VERMONT

I LIKE that Scripture line that says
The fields are white for harvest—yes,
Already white—such fields Vermont
Now shows in all their fruitfulness;
The season's summit lies behind,
The time has passed for spade and plow,
The sickle and the scythe appear—
The fields are white for harvest now.

The rye and oaten stalks are crisp,
The curling corn leaves quite the same,
With edges like that desert growth
That wears a bayonet in its name;
The buckwheat, true, has not yet said
How many bins it will endow,
But it's a-blossoming just as white
As though 'twere time for harvest now.

It makes me think that Virgil speaks
Of Autumn lifting up his head
Within the fields, and brings to mind
The words the "household poet" said
About the bearded grain and flowers,
That 'neath a common stroke must bow—
In literature as well as life
The fields are white for harvest now.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The eager farmer boy resolves
To learn to bind his sheaf of grain,
And halfway kneeling, makes his band
And knots it with heroic strain;
Then straightening up, he stooks his sheaf,
Inspects his hands, unhats his brow,
And dreams, perchance, of other fields
Than those he helps to harvest now.

To plow, to sow, and then to reap—
So runs the old and ordered plan,
For whoso gathereth into barns
Is prudent since the world began;
The time to sow is sowing time,
While yet the buds are on the bough,
'Tis time to reap when fields are white
And they are white for harvest now.

Would that those scarlet fields of war
Might see their fearful reaping end,
And that in place of "shot" and "shell"
Might come such words as "faith" and
"friend;"

Would that those fields were white, and peace
Secured by universal vow—
It darkens heaven and earth to know
They are not white for harvest now.

VERMONT OYSTER SUPPERS

THERE'S nothing that I think of more
Than oyster-supper nights of yore,
Them evenings when the church or grange
Was out for coin and chink and change,
To capture which for weeks ahead
They spread the bills that billed the spread,
Inviting every soul in town
To lay a half a dollar down.

They always picked a moonful night
So Luna might contribute light;
They planned it so that drummer Low
Would be in town and have to go;
They even set it so Jerome,
The logging boss, would be at home;
They used cold blood and cool finesse
To make them nights a hot success.

These 'foresaid points are very clear
Whilst others fade from year to year;
For instance, did the oysters "come,"
And if so, was I served to some,
Or did I get with bowl and spoon
Some water that was warmed too soon?
And did I hear my seatmate say
Her oyster must have got away?

No matter—they was sure a treat,
Them oysters that we s'posed we'd eat;
The broth we s'posed would pass our lips
A rosy recollection sips;
And how our thumbs enjoyed to crack
A Boston cracker's brittle back!
What though the feast was oyster shy
The other things was heaping high:

For cabbage salad, splashed with egg,
Was always made by Mother Gregg,
And Aunty Allard loved to bake
A Pyramid-of-Ghaza cake,
And frost it down from tip to toe
With frosting fresh as sugar snow,
And buttered biscuit, yes; it's true,
Was always sent by Sister Drew.

And there was pickles, jams and jells
As fine as Mr. Biltmore sells,
And rolltop cake and mincemeat pie,
And tarts that most put out your eye,
And doughnuts that was raised all night,
A-fried in leaf lard painted white—
Two great long tables, set with care,
And not a criscoed victual there.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The tables stacked, Odella Pope
Would always start a game of rope;
She'd jump right in and say, "I'm It,"
And play until the last one quit,
And when she slapped you on the wrist
Her mother's daughter soon got kissed—
Ah! yes; what charming hours they bore,
Them oyster-suppered nights of yore!

HOUSECLEANING DAY IN VERMONT

TO clean a house is still some job,
As any eye can see,
And yet it ain't a hackumstance
To what it used to be
When ma pinned up her gingham dress,
And pa took off his blouse,
And everybody pitched right in
And went to cleaning house.

The dishes, pictures, beds and chairs
Soon found themselves outdoors;
Our yard was jest as full of things
As two compartment stores;
You'd s'pose we fitted pedlars out,
The same as Broadway Rouss—
That's how our dooryard used to look
The day we cleaned the house.

The mantel clock, it ticked away
Beneath the Harvey tree;
The victuals safe was next the road
And bread and cheese was free;
The hitching post held up my brace
Of dust-conserving grouse,
And Henry Clay stood on his head
The day we cleaned the house.

We cracked the fambly looking glass
A little more each year,
But didn't throw it down the bank,
For things them days was dear;
We glued the whatnot shelves back in,
We "finished up" the souse,
And burnt a bunch of wax-works flowers
Each time we cleaned the house.

The clothesline reeked with quilts and mats,
And 'long the portico,
Stood all the winder sash there was
Upstairs and down below;
And every winder that was washed
I had to go and douse
With water that I pumped myself,
The day we cleaned the house.

We scrubbed the chairs and blacked the stove
And took the heater off,
And scoured the ikon grandpa Tripp
Brought back from Peterhof;
We each could see the others work,
There wan't no chance to chouse,
And sometimes two was mad at once
The day we cleaned the house.

The Sunday school collection box,
And paregoric shelf,
Was things that ma attended to
Entirely by herself;
And once she said, or nearly said,
"Jim Tripp, put on your blouse
And go away and doctor sheep,
While I refresh this house."

The time our goods was back inside
'Twas ten o'clock, about;
We couldn't bedcord all the beds
And so I went without;
'Twas fun to lay there on the floor
As quiet as a mouse—
I never had no other fun
The day we cleaned the house.

DIPPING CANDLES IN VERMONT

A-DIPPING candles used to be
A sight it soothed your eyes to see;
It ain't like pouring tallow down
A metal throat you buy in town;
It ain't like fishing out a mold
And casting sugar cakes or gold,
It's wicking, tallow, wit and tact
Combined in one artistic fact.

And so it's right enough to ask
"Is this a squire's or lady's task?"
And echo answers sharp and clear,
"The female form is needed here;"
A man of candle-dipping turn
Would be the kind that wouldn't churn,
The kind that's always in the way
And never out of debt a day.

A soft-compacted wicking ball
Is what is needed first of all;
And this you see Fidelia touch
And take enough of, not too much;
And then she hums a little song
And cuts it "right," but not too long;
And then she knots it 'round her stick,
Jest thick enough, but not too thick.

Meanwhile, as probably as not,
The tallow's been a-getting hot,
And now the old big kettle cools
Amongst the backroom tubs and stools,
For substances solidify
At melting point, (X equals Pi);
That's why you have to "seize the hour"
Or get inferior candle power.

Then next Fidelia takes a chair—
The straight-backed one that's always there—
And grasps her hickory dipping-stick
That holds a dozen warps of wick,
And, poising it above the pool,
She lets it dip and drip and drool;
Then up and down again— jest so,
As Candle Brothers start to grow.

Then stick in hand, three steps or four
She takes and ope's the outside door,
Whereat all kinds of northwest cold
The little fellers' forms enfold,
With such effect the tallow dears
Hush up their stalactitic tears:
Then back she goes and starts again
To bathe the little candle men.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

At last inside her box they go,
The pretty candles, "snow on snow,"
Each tallow man ten inches long,
Bemade with art, baptized with song;
Fidelia's handiwork, indeed,
It's all the blessing that they need;
Her grandchild, Gladys, let me say,
Can turn no tastier trick today.

OLD VERMONT ROADS

THE old-time roads, they used to run
Right over all the hills and rises,
And made the shortest kind of cut
To get to Benning Wentworth's prizes;
They wasn't tipped with tepid tar,
They might have made a shofer cavi,
But they was all the kind of roads
Our settler fathers had to travel.

They run them roads from town to town
About the way they shot a rifle;
A river didn't change their course,
A mountain made 'em bend a trifle;
Oh! yes; they jest was "water-bound"—
No grease or graft or even gravel,
But still they averaged 'bout as good
As what we modern "dusties" travel.

The fathers didn't walk abroad
Arrayed in pumps and Paris slippers;
They took no hikes along the pikes,
They never posed as "Sunday trippers;"
They didn't wash their socks with lux,
Or rense 'em out in *eau de javel*,
And where they went they had to go—
That's why the fathers used to travel.

It's 'bout the same with us to-day;
You don't back out your panting flivver
To take a pleasure ride—not much—
And get an embolismic liver;
You know jest how a shell-hole looks,
You've seen all sorts of "surface" ravel,
You know that when you near a bridge
You'll see it billed, "Unsafe for Travel."

And when a highway hit a grant
In them old days, it didn't schism,
But plowed right through to Center Town,
Like highbrows chasing up an ism;
And there they built a hard-shell church,
But didn't fool with soft-shell gravel—
The road the circuit-rider used
Was good enough for all to travel.

The teams from Albany got through,
The stages seldom missed in Summer,
The sacred cod was right on hand
But not as yet the Boston drummer;
He didn't come until he heard
The rap of Trade's compelling gavel,
And all the road he counted on
Was one a traveling man could travel.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

It's great to trace them roadways now
Through worn-out field and back-lot mowing;
The sullen holes and lilac trees
Still show where life was once a-flowing;
They're smoother now than lots of "pikes,"
A-dumdummed up with soft-nose gravel—
I often wish we had 'em back,
Them roads the fathers used to travel.

VERMONT CHEESEMAKING

WHEN white grass makes the pasture white,
And butter needs a carrot tonic;
When ragweed seed invades your head
And bursts with noises disharmonic;
When cows shrink up about a third,
And neighbor children 'gin to tease
For curd and parings—then it's time
To think about a-making cheese.

And first you put your setting tub
A-soak to see how fast it's leaking,
When, Pop! the bottom hoop blows up
And sets your sputterphone to speaking;
A-next you get the runnet jar,
And scour and scald it all you please—
Oh! yes; there's quite a lot to do
To get in shape for making cheese.

And then you drag the cheese-press out
And wash it up in thirteen waters,
And prop the platform where it stands
Before the dumb contrivance totters;
Then Johnny crawls 'way underneath
Upon his anxious hands and knees,
To find the stone that weights the pole
That turns the press that shapes the cheese.

The basket, followers, paddles, hoops,
A-feel the scrub brush next in order,
And some folks run a cheesecloth hem
To hold the ravelings 'round the border;
You then rescreen the cheese safe door,
And make the button turn with ease—
Oh! it's a knack to get the hang
Of fixing up for making cheese.

You hunt the special table next
On which to do the daily turning;
'Twill be a change from skimming milk
And always and forever churning;
And last you pick a bunch of sage,
A-down there near the cherry trees,
And find your little pointed knife,
And then you're fixed for making cheese.

Then when the cheeses come along,
My! ain't it fun to pat and oil 'em;
'Most any other hands than yours
Would have a tendency to spoil 'em;
Each cheese a-setting on its board—
They beat the Neuchatels and Bries—
There's nothing more to do but hope
Your man is 'mazing fond of cheese.

VOTING THE PAUPERS IN VERMONT

“NO choice again? say; that makes twice,
Before we’ll know it, in goes Rice,

They’ve got the meeting packed;
We ought to bag that poorhouse vote
And bury Rice and run in Groat—

It’s only four we lacked;
Now see here Jim, you fetch Blind Tim,
And see here Sprague, you get Old Teg,
And I’ll bring Grow and Foolish Joe—

Let’s come to life and act.

“Say, Flint, you take the floor, By Gum!
And talk till we can go and come,

It’s jest two miles, you know;
The going’s good, we won’t be long,
Jest give ’em any kind of song

And keep ’em stomping snow;
And see here Jim, you fetch Blind Tim,
And I’ll get Grow and Foolish Joe,
And see here Sprague, it’s yours for Teg—
Unhitch your teams and ‘Go!’ ”

The poorhouse, bathed in frost that day,
Suspected not this furious fray,

When three two-horsepower teams
Dash up with noise enough to rout
A hunderd peaceful paupers out
Of placid drugstore dreams;
And old Blind Tim is bagged by Jim,
And old Lame Teg, he goes with Sprague,
And in piles Grow and Foolish Joe
Who jabbers, scraps and screams.

As now the drivers start again
They wrap these forms that once were men
With clothes the horses wear
And sozzly pung rugs—then they fall
On Rice's record, "Dang it all!

His father wasn't square;"
And driver Jim, he primes Blind Tim,
And driver Sprague, he primes Old Teg,
But Grow and Joe both want to know
If "Cider Stearns" is there.

At length the meetinghouse appears
Wherein they've voted years and years,
And forth "the meeting" pours;
The horses smoke, the drivers shout,
And four old used-ups half fall out
As everybody roars;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And worker Jim, he grabs Blind Tim,
And worker Sprague, he nabs Old Teg,
And Flint snakes Grow and Foolish Joe
 Inside the vestry doors.

Up towards the ballot box they shove,
The wise and foolish, hand in glove,
 For Flint has done his part
And held the meeting; now he stands
And sticks the votes inside their hands
 With Tammanistic art;
And old Blind Tim, he votes through Jim,
And next votes Teg, upheld by Sprague,
And Grow and Joe make out to throw
 The Freeman's paper dart.

The hustlers win and in goes Groat
As Second Lister—Rice's throat
 Is cut, his race is run;
The poorhouse voters turn the tide,
And "social justice," oft denied,
 For once, By Gosh! is done:
Hurrah for Jim and old Blind Tim!
Hurrah for Sprague and Flint and Teg!
Hurrah for Grow and Foolish Joe!
 The "lister fight" is won.

BANKING UP VERMONT HOUSES

A HOUSE without a suller wall
Is jest no kind of house at all;
A mud, or Calafornie, sill
Would be taboo in Underhill;
They always excavate the spot
Beneath a building in Charlotte;
You find, jest as you s'pose you would,
Vermont foundations pretty good—
But here's the gall inside the cup,
They every one need banking up.

No underpinning ever cost
Enough to wholly block the frost;
Unless you pack it 'round with leaves
The cistern pump will have the heaves;
The spuds and turnips turn to stone,
The headcheese harden into bone;
Your wife's preserves all go to waste,
Your cider lose that claret taste—
You'll lack the means to dine or sup
Unless you bank your buildings up.

It's quite a little labor—quite,
To bank a house and do it right;
You've lost the boards you used before
And have to go and hunt for more;

I've seen old hencoops, sheepracks, doors,
Yes Sir; and parts of stable floors,
The pen that held the fatted calf,
All utilized in this behalf—
I'll bet 'twould bother Bertha Krupp
To bank the whole of Hinesburg up.

It gets so late before you start
The ground is like a miser's heart;
The stakes you drive with stinging whacks
Do nothing much, but dent the axe;
At last your temper gets so tense
You yank the pickets off the fence;
Before the leaves your house encase,
There's nothing loose around the place—
It ain't like touring in a "Hup,"
This banking of a building up.

The "boxing" done, the boys begin
To rake the leaves and pile 'em in;
The youngster cocks 'em up like hay,
While Johnny baskets 'em away;
But, My! he treads 'em in so stout
He pokes the basket bottoms out,
And then, By George! the first you know
It starts to rain and sleet and snow—
There's bitter, sure, inside the cup
Of him who banks a building up.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Right here you have to make a pause
Of several days until it thaws,
And then the sodden mess demands
New leaves and labor at your hands;
At last your work with slabs you crown,
And rob a wall to hold 'em down:
You then go in and heave a sigh,
And fix the fire and burn a pie—
The cat walks 'round beside the pup,
They know you've finished banking up.

VERMONT BUCKWHEAT BATTER

I OFTEN see in moony moods
Our old big yellow pitcher,
With three white bands around the bulge
That made the yellow richer;
I also hear an iron spoon
A-make a muffled clatter,
And then, By George! I know what's up—
It's time for buckwheat batter.

Yes; I can see the work go on
Through Memory's crystal glasses:
I see 'em take potater yeast
And New Orleans molasses,
A bowl of sifted buckwheat flour,
Of salt, a little smatter,
And whip 'em up in water warm—
Hurrah for buckwheat batter!

I see 'em plan to make it rise
By calm and stiddy heating;
They'd wrap the pitcher 'round and 'round
In home-made flannel sheeting,
Then set it pretty near the stove,
Or on a warming platter,
And in the morning, bless your soul,
We had our buckwheat batter.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And say, the way it used to last—
I never knew the reason—
'Twas like the widder's cruse of oil
That lasted through the season;
When low, they'd put a-something in,
It didn't seem to matter
A-what it was, and up 'twould come,
That splendid buckwheat batter.

I tell you what, them buckwheat cakes
Besplashed with sassage gravy,
A-saved more lives than that there lamp
Devised by Humphrey Davy;
The ceiling got a-smoked, I know,
At times the fat would spatter,
But Oh! I'd like to have some cakes
A-made with mother's batter.

**WHY DISTRICT SCHOOL USED TO KEEP IN
VERMONT**

WHEN district school was almost done
I used to feel tremendous good;
My hands was tired with doing sums
I never quarter understood;
I couldn't see why school should keep,
But now I'm twelve, it's jest as plain—
It kept so teacher'd have a chance
To use her golden watch and chain.

I never saw as neat a watch
Excepting once at Woodstock Fair;
It opened like my 'rithmetic
In front or back or anywhere;
And Gee! it used to shine so bright
Frank Perkins said it scorched his brain—
There wouldn't been much school, I guess,
If teacher'd had no watch and chain.

The chain was sure the longest one
There was in all our part of town;
It went way up behind her neck,
And made a turn and then come down;
And on it was a slide that looked
Like some big Spanish fly from Spain—
No wonder teacher liked to teach
With such a dandy watch and chain.

When little Tim went up to read
She'd put one hand around his side,
And with the other hand she'd grasp
That insectiverous-looking slide;
When Tim said A, she'd slip it up;
At B, she'd slip it down again—
You see, he'd never learnt to read
If teacher'd had no watch and chain.

She'd wind that watch 'most every hour
Then flash it up against her ear;
Then use it for a looking glass
To see her eyes and skin was clear;
And always when she used to say
"Examples: number one, explain:"
We noticed, Edson Purse and me,
She timed us with her watch and chain.

One day she showed us after school
Her 'nitials ringwormed on the case,
And Ida Gardner saw inside
The picture of a feller's face:
And Ida said, "Why, that's the man
That met you, teacher, at the train;"
But teacher thought it was the man
From which she bought her watch and chain.

"PICKING STONE" IN VERMONT

THERE'S nothing quite so lorn and lone
In rural life as "picking stone;"
It holds the record 'round the farm
For making farmer boys "disarm;"
It's sent more help off "down below"
Than milking, chores or shoveling snow;
It's made more hired men decamp
Than too much souse or too much samp:
No sadder stunt was ever known
Around the farm than "picking stone."

Each year when we begun to cart
The grain, a sickness hit my heart;
I knew that through them fields I'd go
Again in 'bout a week or so;
I therefore rubbered far and near
To see if "stone" was thick that year;
I tried the stubble with my shoe
To see if it would puncture through—
Oh! I can always spare a moan
When I remember "picking stone."

Anon, some hot September day,
When puppies felt too warm to play,
And geese was too het up to hiss,
I'd get directions 'bout like this:

"This afternoon I spect to 'tend
That auction down at Greensboro Bend;
You best put on your old brogans
And after dinner lay your plans,
When I'm away with neighbor Sloan,
To try your hand at 'picking stone.' "

And so I tried—both hands I tried,
Both feet and every part beside;
I pawed and clawed and poked and kicked
And toed and heeled and purled and picked;
Each hand a bar, each foot a skid,
I pried like gamblers on a "lid,"
The puffballs filled my eyes with smoke,
My fingers bled, my back was broke,
The thistles scratched my crazy bone—
I wished that I could turn to "stone."

My face was camouflaged with dirt,
But still 'twas whiter than my shirt;
Each time I kicked a cobble free
About a hunderd bugs I'd see,
A hunderd kinds of wigs and worms
And microbe spawn and cocoon germs;
I'd heave the cobble on the pile
As though I'd 'scaped from something vile—
Alas! the thoughts have never flown
That grew in me when "picking stone."

But what such farming had to do
With getting rich I never knew;
A funny crop—the more the yield
The less the listers taxed your field;
The more you raised, 'twas strange to tell,
The less you had to eat or sell;
It made my farming faith so weak
That off I went to study Greek,
And back I've come to make it known
That Adam's curse is "picking stone."

"BUTCHERING IN THE FALL" IN VERMONT

I WONDER what's become of them—

Them men that butchered in the Fall,
And drove a meat cart all around

The country roads when I was small;
I see the cart a-coming now—

The butcher, foundered horse and all—
And wonder where them fellers are
That used to "butcher in the Fall."

They always lived "way over back,"

Where hay grew short and hardhack tall,
On Center road or Heathen hill—

So fur the preacher didn't call;
They worked a run-down farm on shares,
But raised some cider, after all—
I wonder where them fellers are
That used to "butcher in the Fall."

Right after harvesting they'd buy

A runty steer of Deacon Hall,
And widder Williams' farrer cow,
A sheep or two of Cap'n Small,
Then pitch right in to get rich quick
Without no fuss or fol-de-rol—

Oh! yes; they hustled once a year,
Them chaps that "butchered in the Fall."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And then they'd get an old express
And on its bones a "cart" install;
They'd rig the tailboard end to drop
And make a shelf on which to loll
And chin and dicker, saw and pound
And cut and chop and flirt and scrawl—
Oh! yes; them fellers' ways was "free"
That used to "butcher in the Fall."

On Monday, pretty clost to noon,
You'd see a caravanic pall
Of highway dust—the ground would shake,
The dog would bark, the chickens squall;
The butcher man would heave in sight
And stop as though he'd struck a wall—
Them fellers made a lot of noise
That used to "butcher in the Fall."

And then he'd be so near sold out
You'd wish he hadn't stopped at all;
But when a housewife traded deep
They'd treat her like a little doll;
They'd throw a gash of livver in,
And toss the fambly cat the gall—
I wonder where them fellers are
That used to "butcher in the Fall."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

They kept a tub of pale corn beef
Up forrard, covered with a shawl,
And when a party wanted some
They'd jab it with a kind of awl;
They'd stick their fingers through the steak
And almost make your gooseflesh crawl—
And yet the wimmen always liked
Them chaps that "butchered in the Fall."

Their steelyards never made you think
Of Howe or Fairbanks, not at all;
Their saws was dull, but not their wits—
I've seen 'em lead a country ball;
And where a poor man's wife was sick
They'd go a long ways 'round to call—
Yes; they was pretty decent chaps,
Them chaps that "butchered in the Fall."

VERMONT IN LATE SEPTEMBER

THE roadside bloom I saw last week,
It nearly tipped me over;
I 'most forgot forget-me-nots
And buttercups and clover;
'Twas "Primary" day but I ignored
The fierce politicians,
For all the countryside was bright
With goldenrod and asters.

Jest motor down there Shaftsbury way,
If you distrust my story,
And view those famed Walloomsack fields
Which Fame has sold to Glory,
And when you walk where went the guns
And men and muster-masters,
You'll wish that Molly Stark could see
The goldenrod and asters.

Your mind won't take no greenhouse turn,
You won't be sedum silly;
You'll long for no laburnum tree
Or Honolulu lily;
The feast the soul requires is spread
And no excuse for fasters;
You'll sup until the day declines
On goldenrod and asters.

What southern bloom is like to this!
What tropic oleander,
Or amaranth the ancients sought
Along the swift Scamander!
The earthquake ash that piles itself
In Spanish Peaks and Shastas,
Contains within its mass no seed
Of goldenrod and asters.

I tell you what, it lifts you up,
This Autumn adoration;
It lifts you up right through the air,
Like spirit levitation;
And when I'm old, jest get my chair
And rig the legs with castors,
And wheel me out where I can see
The goldenrod and asters.

SHALL VERMONTERS RAISE SHEEP?

I SEE the Boston papers say
Vermont should tread the woolly way;
Their columns shout in accents deep—
“Wake up! and to go raising sheep;
With bleating flocks your hills endot
And muttonize each vacant lot;
Time was, Vermont Merinos stood
Against the world, and so they should,
And then you all went off to sleep—
Wake up! and raise a million sheep.”

It's natural—and it does no harm—
For them to tell us how to farm;
This raising sheep, like raising Cain,
Is easy for a city swain;
The Boston farmer knows what's best
For folks down East and folks out West;
He's thought it through with special care
'Twixt Young's Hotel and Harvard Square,
But still he hasn't had to keep
A lantern lit for sickly sheep.

He hasn't had to dodge and duck
Before a serious-minded buck;
He's never “sheared” for twenty days
And got no pay but pork and praise;

He's never shortened horns or tails
Or cut a kicking cosset's nails;
He's never fussed with neighbor Brown
Because his fence was always down;
He's never waded where 'twas deep
And washed and ironed a hunderd sheep.

I knew a farmer near Vergennes
Who swapped his Dorset flock for hens;
He traded even, sheep for hen,
And felt so good he cried Amen!
"No more around the kitchen stove,"
He said, "will wobbly lambkins rove;
No more at sunrise will I pull
From angel sheep their mortal wool—
Oh! I'm so glad that I could weep,
I'm free from sorrow, sin and sheep."

I knew a farmer's wife that said
"You'll find me at the sheep barn dead
Some April day, and when you do,
You'll see my body broke in two;
I always know 'twill happen when
I throw myself acrost a pen
To make a mean old sheep be good
And own her baby as she should—
Oh! what a cup of tea I'd steep
If John would only sell his sheep."

You see this business has a side
The Boston farmer hasn't tried;
No doubt he knows how cutlets taste
With little peas and spinach graced,
But has he ever struck a lick
At doctoring foot-complaint or tick?
Or has he ever sold a pelt
For what would buy jest sixteen smelt?
I guess this city plan will "keep"
Until there's more demand for sheep.

A VERMONT GRINSTONE

OUR old big grinstone used to stand
 Inside the sleigh and wagon shed,
The jack and workbench close at hand,
 The tackle blocks jest overhead;
It had a special blue-eyed grit
 That took right hold of standard steel,
I never saw it flinch a bit—
 That wondrous argillitic wheel.

They hauled it up from Boston back
 In teaming times, so grandpa said,
While yet the Fitchburg railroad track
 Was sleeping in its ore bed;
The neighbors liked that stone so much
 It made us boys untimely stern,
For not a-one but old man Hutch
 Would ever bring a hand to turn.

But worse than that, as you'll agree,
 Was when that grinstone's form was towed
Outdoors beneath the Harvey tree
 That grew tarnation near the road;
Each haying brought the move about—
 When home we come from school, 'twas there;
The sap tub with the goosequill spout
 Had also found the summer air.

Ten thousand scythes I'm sure we ground
 Within the next six weeks or so;
One million times that stone went 'round,
 And me the horse that made it go;
A cradle knife was worst of all—
 You didn't have no horsepower left—
Five inches wide and five feet tall,
 And add to that the grinder's heft.

But what jest made the world look brown,
 Was turning there when folks went by;
Your backsides bobbing up and down,
 Now towards the earth, now towards the sky;
Each time, by George! we went to grind
 The city boarder girls I knew,
Would happen down the road and find
 My shape a-writhing fro and to.

I'd see 'em up the road a mile,
 Delightful lassies, every one;
But, Shucks! I couldn't bow or smile
 As past they went a-full of fun;
I'd jest pull down my old straw hat,
 And turn my face the other way,
Perhaps they'd think 'twas Foolish Nat
 That always used to help us hay.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

To keep the boys at home my code
Is this: All grinstones out of sight;
Don't set no grinstones next the road
Unless you want to grind at night;
Don't plant your Harveys 'round your door—
A fruit no boy on earth can spurn—
It takes one hand to hold the core
And leaves him only one to turn.

THE VERMONT THRASHERS ARE COMING

“YEP; there they come there down the road,
Two teams, three men and extry horse;
There's Jabe a-riding in the 'power,'
And there's Sam Oakes and Elwin Morse;
Of course, they'd get here jest at night,
About the time the chores begin,
But I don't care if Sam 'shakes down'
And Jabe himself will 'feed 'er in.'

“ ‘Twill take an hour to get set up;
Wife, have your supper jest at six;
Son, run and open both the gates
And then get word to Deacon Hicks:
Hullo there Jabe! Hullo there Sam!
Hullo there Elwin! How've you been?
You're 'putting up?' and Sam 'shakes down?'
All right, if Jabe will 'feed 'er in.'

“Drive straight ahead—don't bark the fence—
Straight through between the crib and stack;
There's quite a pitch this side the floor,
You used to turn around and back:
Son, get a brick to block the wheels
And not stand there all day and grin;
Here, Scamp, get minus quick or Jabe
Will feed your bothering carcass in.

“What’s that: you don’t unload the ‘power,’
But jest pull out the forrard wheels
And let ’er down: By Golly! Jabe,
You’re great on all them saving deals:
You want some spikes? well; here they are,
And here’s your last year’s blocking pin—
I hope you’ll have Sam Oakes ‘shake down’
And that this trip you’ll ‘feed ’er in.’

“By George! that’s easy; now bring up
The second team—get scarcer there
Young Simpson—here’s the extry skids—
Can’t Deacon come? well; I declare!
There, now she’s true, whack in the dogs,
Tomorrow how the wheels will spin!
The belt’s jest right—sweep up the floor;
Say; Jabe, you’ve got to ‘feed ’er in.’ ”

“SHORTENING” VERMONT STYLE

WHEN Oleomargarine was small,
And Crisco wasn't born at all,
While yet the house of Cotton Seed
Was 'dentified with chicken feed,
Before a single packer's name
Was hung within the Hall of Fame,
We cooked with shortening—and I'll say
We got it in the good old way.

We killed a pig, or two, or more,
As Christian folks had done before,
And when the pork was all put down,
Or “lent” to neighbors 'round the town,
To be repaid us, flitch for flitch,
When they themselves got freshmeat rich—
We tidied up the house and yard
And turned to trying out the lard.

We aimed to do it Tuesday, say,
When Monday's wash was out the way;
And first we made a kind of dope
With ashes, cider, salt and soap,
And scoured the big brass kettle up
As shiny as a loving cup:
Oh! if I owned that kettle now
'Twould buy a horse and half a cow.

The kitchen arch was nextly lit
With Mr. Kettle top of it,
All filled with that delightful leaf
That's only taller-stock in beef;
Then next we moved the stovewood box,
And filled the space with jars and crocks,
And found a middlings bag 'twas new
To strain the precious product through.

We kept the squeezers "overhead"
In what was called the woodhouse shed;
The leather hinges, soft and black,
Would sometimes need an extry tack,
And then we scalt 'em till the steam
Was thick around as city cream,
And dried 'em on my tippet nail
Beyond the reach of Towser's tail.

Our old big skimmer then took hold
And bagged them scraps of russet gold;
We dreened the bag as long as 'twould
And then we squoze it mighty good,
And when we give the final squeeze
We held the handles 'twixt our knees:
That bag, By Gracious! had to stand
The "punch" the fambly force could land.

And say; them scraps was fine to eat,
A pinch of salt brought out the sweet;
And when that lard was cool and hard,
Such lard; so white; Oh! My; such lard!
The bosom friend of chicken pie,
The apple of a doughnut's eye—
Bring on most any Hoover card
But dose my dough with homemade lard.

HAYING TIME IN VERMONT

THERE'S something more to "haying time"
Than jest machinery's rattling rhyme;
Than Hoorah Boys and Men and Teams!
Than sagging sheds and hot highbeams;
Than scratching rake and crawling cart
And snakes bisected through the heart—
What is it?

There's something more than calloused hands
And stiff old neck and pouring glands;
Than grinding scythes while yet it's night
And doing chores by Dog Star light;
Than being forced at last to hire
A lame man and the village liar—
What is it?

There's something more than blistered skin
And bed too tired to wiggle in;
Than dodging through the appletrees
To shake a squad of bumblebees;
Than carting in your crop so wet
You know the "middle bent" will sweat—
What is it?

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

There's more than cussing mice and moles
And getting mad at woodchuck holes;
Than having half your load slide off
In sight of folks a-playing golf;
Than chasing wandering Pats and Petes
That turn your haycaps into sheets—
What is it?

There's more than "pitching on" so swift
Your pipe goes out each time you lift;
Than "picking out" the Pratt lot swale
And curing timothy with hail;
Than trips to Hastings' blacksmith shop
To make that pounding pitman stop—
What is it?

They say there's nothing folks will shirk
A-quicker than a hard day's work,
And yet, there's nothing anywhere
That cures more ills or kills more care;
No, Sir: there's nothing 'neath the sun
Compared with red-hot work well done—
Is that it?

PLAYING CHECKERS IN VERMONT

Afore the game of goff come 'round,
That takes an old chap, fairly sound,
And dries his juice and numbs his will,
And makes his heart stand darn near still;
The game that fails to save or give
The strength a man must have to live;
That fills him full of strenuous zest
And works him when he needs to rest—
Afore the times I've jest portrayed
Another game Vermonters played.

That game was checkers—hear the click
Of crowning kings and jumping quick;
I've seen 'em play in Stoddard's store
Till Stoddard went to lock the door;
I've seen Cal Cobb and Galen Grout
A-playing till the fire went out;
The boys begun afore their teens
And played with different colored beans;
A band-box lid, with charcoal scored,
A-quickly made a checker board.

No cross-roads ville where natives met
But had its checker club or set;
Each logging camp its sacred place
Where you could find the "checker face";
The State House had its checker ring,
Each poorhouse had its checker king;
The jiff the prison guards was free
They'd start a guardroom checker bee;
Backgammon, yes; and give-away
Was games for mothers' fools to play.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I've hung around old cobbler Hicks,
With one boot off for him to fix,
When in would come Jedge What's-his-name
And stump him jest for half a game;
Then Hicks would kinder stretch his legs,
And spit a mouthful out of pegs,
And then they'd start, By Gum! to play
And keep it up a-most all day—
It didn't do no good to fret
Or I'd a-been there waiting yet.

The Braintree champion come along
One time and played with Silas Strong,
And Si a-skunked him right in sight
Of Strutty Mills and Minot Wright;
He tried to work the "old fourteen"
But Silas blocked him slick and clean;
We all chipped in a-handsome then
And bought a set of fancy men,
But Si, confound his modest hide,
He never used 'em 'fore he died.

There ain't no other game I know
That tries your intellectuals so;
A billiard ball, however struck,
Dilutes geometry with luck;
The painted deck the idler deals,
The idler's painted soul reveals;
And all the games a-played with dice
The brainy never play but twice,
But checkers calls for thinking straight
Up here in this old stand-by State.

THE OLD VERMONT FARM

'MOST every day some village care
A-kinder jolts me back,
To that old place 'way off beyond
The cars and railroad track;
Three thoughts of that unlimbered life
Divide my griefs by three,
And make me say, "By Ginger! wife,
A farmer's life for me."

I think about them stay-by things
We cooked there on the farm;
Them things that filled your back with strength,
And filled your soul with balm;
That good dried beef—that picked-up fish,
A-salt as salt could be,
I hanker still for that there dish—
It's good enough for me.

Our horses went a-fast enough,
If not the pace that kills;
The buggy had a boot and back
And leather 'round the fills;
Our Portland sleigh was picked a-twice
For leap-year rides, By Gee!
And if 'twould do for Hattie Rice
'Twas good enough for me.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I find new kinds of silk-faced shirts
And neckties, now and then,
A-laid inside my dresser drawer,
At times as high as ten;
I listen how a tailor's cut
Corrects a baggy knee,
But boughten clothes, I tell you what,
Have mostly covered me.

A-once when I took off my boots,
I always looked and felt
To see if they was wearing through,
Or cracking 'round the welt;
But now you have to take each shoe
And roost it on a tree—
Oh! give me back the boots I knew,
They're good enough for me.

My books are not the parlor kind—
I know they're pretty plain;
The fambly calls 'em "farmers' books,"
They give my wife a pain;
But, anyway, despite their looks,
I think I'll leave 'em be,
I kinder guess a farmer's books
Will have to do for me.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I can't go near a store no more
Unless I want to trade;
I never hear what's going on
Till all the plans are made;
This dooryard life has little charm
For folks that once was free—
Oh! give me back our sidehill farm,
It's good enough for me.

VERMONT DRIED BEEF

I'M sure 'twould give the world relief
To know our rule for drying beef;
For forty years we cured our meat
With jest the same, By Gosh! receipt;
To know the good results we got
Might help the world a quite a lot;
A better product never yet
Was on a dotted doily set—
The preacher et so much that dad,
A-more than once, looked kinder mad.

To turn the trick without default
You take a quart of rocky salt,
Two spoons of saltedpeter, mind,
You get the skull and crossbones kind,
Of Orleans sweetness jest a cup,
And mix the three porportions up;
You then produce five hams of beef,
Or six if you had jest as lief,
And have 'em trimmed by light of day
And all the gristle cut away.

Then get the old big wooden bowl—
The one the Gypsies almost stole—
And fit the hammy hunks in nice,
Like pickles that you pack in spice,

And when they lay there calm and still,
A-subject to your sovereign will,
You pour the mixture all around
And make a wish, but not a sound,
And then you set the bowl a-where
A handy step will take you there.

And then the strangest things begin—
The juice runs out, the cure-all in;
A sort of infiltration starts
Betwixt the mixed and meaty parts,
And first you know there ain't a sign
Of salt, or anything but brine;
Your hasty pudding paddle then
You take a little after ten
Each second day, and stir the brew
And turn each clod a turn or two.

In jest three weeks, or four, or less,
Depending on the "patroness,"
The brine is all absorbed away,
Or, as a household bard might say,
"The sea subsides and leaves a reef
Of good old solid home-dried beef;"
Each piece all right to be a-strung
And in the backroom chamber hung—
The finest eating here below,
The supreme substance mortals know.

MID-APRIL IN VERMONT

FROM out his heavenly sallyport
Again Apollo sallies,
And leads his cuirassiers of light
Through these deverdured valleys;
The frost king flies, the sun king wins,
And human nature rallies.

What joy to see the yellow sun
Sweep through the gulfs and gullies,
And disinfect the lanes and lawns
That Winter's rudeness sullies,
And dry the brookland all the way
Clear up to Uncle Cully's!

He warms and lights the deepest dell
And cleanses every dingle;
The meadow runs and rills resolve
With distant seas to mingle;
The lily-of-the-valley bells
Will soon begin to jingle.

The lady's slipper entertains
Less selfish thoughts and kinder,
And acts as if she'd like to leave
Her former life behind her;
I b'lieve she hopes some poet pale
Will come along and find her.

The green at last begins its march
Toward Equinox's summit;
A bird note drops direct from heaven
Belike a choral plummet:
If anybody knows a song
He now begins to hum it.

The last year's mullein stalks stand stiff
In death's unlovely rigor,
But 'round their lifeless roots the grass
A-starts with greening vigor:
The willow fence begins to grow,
The oxen's eyes are bigger.

I wish I lived where Horace did,
Or owned that home of Tully's,
That I might see the sun advance
Through Anio's gulfs and gullies:
But I don't know—we like our place
Right here by Uncle Cully's.

**HAYING, VERMONT AND GINGER DRINK
COORDINATED**

TO know what Dido drank, a scholar
 Would call a high historic aid,
And what goes through a Yankee's collar
 Tells all about him and his trade;
To prove the truth of what I'm saying,
 Away far back as I can think,
A farmer couldn't do his haying
 Without the help of ginger drink.

It someway made a scythe edge keener,
 It helped the boys to mow away;
It made the old bullrake rake cleaner,
 It made the bumblebees less gay;
A little girl 'mid daisies straying,
 With gingham dress and cheeks of pink,
Could make the slackers hump in haying
 By packing out the ginger drink.

Some used to call it "sweetened water,"
 Some called it "Mother Hubbard sling,"
Some took so much it made 'em hotter,
 And some so much it made 'em sing;
The subject, though, that I'm portraying
 With these few strokes of pen and ink
Is, that no man could do his haying
 Unless he stood for ginger drink.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

It wasn't made of noxious gases,
But good well water, cool and pure;
And good blackstrap Orleans molasses,
And ginger that was ginger sure;
And good old vinegar, displaying
That cidery taste that made you wink—
Oh! it was more than half of haying
To have good help and ginger drink.

Your cutterbar would get all gummy,
The pitman rod act quaint and queer,
And your new hand turn out a dummy
Unless the ginger jug was near;
It kept the tedder forks a-playing,
It speeded up the whetstone's clink—
You'd get in Dutch to go to haying
Un-reenforced by ginger drink.

You've no idea how wide its scope was,
How many different things 'twould do;
No other drink or drip or dope was
So universal, tried and true;
'Twas used by all, the proud, the praying—
It didn't put you on the blink—
It always touched the spot in haying,
Vermont's great beverage, Ginger Drink.

VERMONT CORN MEAL

WHAT fun it used to be to feel
The heat inside a bag of meal!
My Gracious! how a winter grist
Would warm a feller's fist and wrist:
It always give us boys a thrill
To see the pung come back from mill;
We'd throw our mittens on the snow
And get as cold as Eskimo,
And then a-towards the corn barn steal
And stick our fingers in the meal.

And there we'd stand and let the law
Of "latent heat" our fingers thaw;
We'd count how many "tens" 'twould take
Before we lost that pleasant ache;
No other sport we ever tried
Had such a scientific side;
But this was fur as we could go,
What made the heat we didn't know,
'Less 'twas, some big electric eel
Was worming 'round inside the meal.

There's lots of games that fellers play
That bat things up, or tend that way,
But corn barn capers did no hurt
Unless we mixed the meal with dirt,

Or failed to lock the corn barn door,
Or spilt the seed peas on the floor,
Or somehow shoved the cat-hole slide
And shut the neighbor's cat inside—
'Twould sure have made a movie reel,
The kinds of fun we had with meal.

We knew the teams that come from mill,
And I can see 'em coming still;
For instance, there was Melvin Shedd
And his old woodshod squeaky sled;
We'd all pile on and take a seat
Across the bags to feel the heat,
Then up he'd lick and off we'd jump
And hit a stone, perhaps, or stump,
But when we struck and took a keel,
You bet, we felt the "me" in meal.

And when our hands would chap and crack
And get all bloody on the back,
We found the meal cure quite as sure
As mother's mutton tallow cure;
I s'pose that's why distinguished dames
And dudes used "MEAL-O" on their frames;
I bought some once, as I recall,
At Paine's Apothecaries Hall,
And though 'twas fifty cents per deal
I only got a box of meal.

We still have "meal" and still have "boys"
But they are not in equipoise;
The day of golden grist is dead
And "process" stuff has come instead,
Them sharp white bits of western bone
The friends of johnnycake bemoan;
While boys are mostly schoolhouse wrecks
Whose fun consists in wearing specs—
Oh! Fortune, treat us from your wheel
To husky boys and yellow meal.

OLD-FASHIONED VERMONT FLOWERS

I LIKE Vermont's old-fashioned flowers—
The dahlia's height and comeliness,
The morning glory's happy face,
The poppy in her summer dress;
But 'mongst the many kinds of flowers
I've loved in days that come no more,
I 'bieve I like the sturtions best
That grew around our woodhouse door.

When Spring would come I used to take
Them crimped sturton seeds and go
And plant 'em in the mellow earth,
And hope and hope and hope they'd grow;
They always grew—they never failed—
I often wished I'd planted more—
Oh! I can see them sturtions yet
A-blooming 'round the woodhouse door.

Each shoot, it had two jagged leaves
When first it peeped above the ground,
But like the eyes that watched 'em grow,
Them jagged leaves soon changed to round;
I used to tend 'em every day,
I called 'em mine—that dream is o'er—
Some kind of cosmos now, I s'pose,
Does business 'round the woodhouse door.

How scarlet and how red they blowed
Amongst the green that banked their beds!
Oh! you could almost see their souls
The way they held their pretty heads;
I'd not a-picked a single one
If there had been a thousand more—
They had their rights as well as me—
The sturtions 'round our woodhouse door.

The orchids of the South I've seen,
The lotus, formed of heavenly bisque,
The flame vine and the saffron rose,
The moon flower's elephantine disc;
But none or all of them replace
The humble flowers I've named before—
The sturtions that were kind enough
To bloom around our woodhouse door.

THOMPSON'S "VERMONT"

THE book, By George! I'd rather own
Than almost any book I've known;
The book that lifts to local fame
The little towns from whence we came,
And shows where most of us may find
The nest that hatched our kin and kind;
That proves we needn't faint or fuss
With honest settlers back of us;
The book Vermonters ought to want
Is Zadock Thompson's book "Vermont."

The book whose linen leaves delight
The reader's thirst and appetite,
And shame the green and heavy clay
That loads the books we buy today;
The book the hand can hold with ease
That wouldn't warp a lady's knees,
And whose bepolished calf outside
Is less like anything than hide—
The book a "native" ought to want,
That is, a native of Vermont.

The book whose wondrous woodcuts show
The bear and hare and carrion crow;
The lamprey with his rubber mouth,
The flying squirrel pointing South;

And eels and owls and ducks and drakes,
And loons and coons and snails and snakes;
The lynx with wide and German jowl,
The panther on his Prussian prowl—
The book a sportsman ought to want
If he's a-sporting 'round Vermont.

Here every kind of pout and trout
And perch are also pictured out,
With salmon, shad and wall-eyed pike,
And sturgeon long as Uncle Ike;
And all the leaves that ever stirred,
And every single sort of bird;
The weasel, shrew and star-nosed mole,
And orange-breasted oriole—
You get the kind of game you want
In Zadock Thompson's book "Vermont."

Those pictures that I used to see
Are just as fresh as they can be;
That Indian* with the great long bow
Is fine as silk, as Indians go;
That "Yorker"† rising through the air
With dangling arms and standing hair,
To greet the catamount on high,
Still cheers and charms my ageing eye—
You find the pictured facts you want
In Zadock Thompson's book "Vermont."

The book wherein the reader reads
Of all the former faiths and creeds;
Each kind of meetinghouse and pew
Receives its orthodoxic due;
The Holy Roller tries the floor,
The Millerite prepares to soar;
The settled ministers are thick
As knots along a hickory stick—
Oh! it's a book the wise should want,
A book of books, that book "Vermont."

Great book! wherein each pig and pup
And horse and hen are added up,
With scores of pearl and potash kilns,
And cider, saw and carding mills;
The darkest day, the hardest freeze,
The thickest ice, the worst disease,
The waterfalls and mineral springs,
With forty thousand other things—
You'll find 'em here just where you want
In Zadock Thompson's book "Vermont."

† Vide Part II, pg. 205
* " " " " 31

VERMONT FARMING TOOLS

THE leakiest roof in all Vermont
Is what is called the sky,
And he who lets his tools "stand out"
Will soon have tools to buy:
Besides, he'll get the stoney stare
From every motoring eye.

I never fully understood
This housing things outdoors;
A wagon pole will warp a foot
Each time it up and pours,
And hail will dent the reddest paint
On any make of mowers.

A right good reaper sticking up
Through drabbly drifts of snow,
Or standing 'round behind the barn,
There where the burdocks grow,
Will make no summer boarders come
Nor debt-collectors go.

I'm told by them that used to own
The Farm Machinery Trust,
There isn't any rust on earth
Like this "exposure" rust;
'Twill eat a tedder right in two
And turn a plow to dust.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The clutch inside a horserake hub
Abhors a winter fog;
The cutterbar that has no home
Is pretty apt to clog;
The man who won't unload his "bobs"
Will some day want a log.

A stoneboat, even, won't improve
"Laid up" on some old ledge;
No apple tree can give a scythe
A carborundum edge;
A beetle doesn't like the woods
And neither does a wedge.

Depreciation is a thing
We folks are slow to learn,
Though stopping it is such a short
And easy way to earn;
The wheel that's kept in good repair
Jest finds it fun to turn.

I'm not a-scolding—not a bit,
But now that fashion chides
All forms of wetness, let us save
Our tools as well as hides,
And keep our farming implements
As dry as our insides.

WASHING SHEEP IN VERMONT

THERE'S folks that look like other folks,
And things germane to other things;
There's jokes that jibe with other jokes,
And kings as punk as other kings;
There's one thing, though, that's plumb unique—
Look up that word before you sleep—
There never was and never will be
Jest such a thing as washing sheep.

Of course, the sheep have gone, because,
I don't know why—I wish I did—
But I'm a-telling how it was
When I was jest a Windsor kid;
Full records of them tow-head days
Inside my memory box I keep—
I know there never was or will be
Jest such a thing as washing sheep.

You first have got to find a brook
Right straight beside the road, that makes
A deep-hole turn, and then you look
For withes and hemlock boards and stakes;
With them you build two rough-house yards
Each side the brook, jest where it's deep—
It takes a lot of work and what not
To set the stage for washing sheep.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Next day all hands start off at four
For Bald Hill pasture; six o'clock
Locates you out in Goshen Gore
A-shaking salt and hollering "Jock";
At last the flock files through the bars,
And 'long the road begins to creep;
It's ten or after when you're ready
To launderize the lovely sheep.

The washer, he's the one that's boss,
Stands facing up-stream, like a trout;
We boys, we poke the sheep across
To Jerdan's strand as they come out;
The way they wobble, though, and blat
Would make a woolen mill look cheap—
No, Sir; there never was or will be
Jest sech a thing as washing sheep.

That washer stands waist-deep in drink,
His frock is torn, his hat is gone;
He cannot see or speak or think,
But squeezes, scrubs and washes on;
He grabs a husky wether's horns,
And, as that wether gives a leap,
It's hard to tell for half a minute
Jest which is man and which is sheep.

The days' works helper throws 'em in,
And has to lift each lobster twice;
He rolls his eyes, unrolls his chin,
And strives to be a human vise;
He's on his back full half the time
And blacker than a chimblly sweep—
There's nothing like it, now or never,
There's nothing jest like washing sheep.

The getting-back-to-pasture part—
Is really worst of all: Oh! Lord;
We'd pile the "give-outs" on the cart
Until we had about a cord;
And when they all was back in feed,
I'll tell you, but you mustn't peep,
Them sheep was dirtier than before—
There's nothing, sure, like washing sheep.

OUR OLD VERMONT LUMBER WAGON

A THING that often 'pears to me
At night, and which I'd like to see
Jest as, By George! it used to be,
Is our old lumber wagon.

The wheels was made by wheelwright Rice,
Whose wheelwright work was extr'y nice;
He also spliced the crossbar twice
Of that same lumber wagon.

We made the body part ourselves,
From boards that once was buttery shelves,
White pine—the pride of woodland elves—
A classy lumber wagon.

'Twas ironed up by blacksmith Drew,
Whose eye and iron both was true,
And I was 'lowed to paint it blue—
Our old blue lumber wagon.

It had no strange "fifth wheel" to vex
Our eyes, and make us stretch our necks,
The kingbolt went right through the ex
Of our old lumber wagon.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

It had no tailboard, rigged to swing,
No seat on which to smoke and sing,
No brake, no shoe, no anything—
 'Twas jest a lumber wagon.

But when 'twas loaded up with muck,
My! how them grease-fed wheels would chuck;
It "talked" like Jim Kiniry's truck—
 Our one-horse lumber wagon.

Oh! if my feelings might prevail
'Twould stand inside my office rail,
And never be for rent or sale—
 Our old blue lumber wagon.

OUR OLD VERMONT APPLE POLE

AS on along through life I go,
A-meeting folks I used to know,
Some feller, say, from District Three,
Who used to set, perhaps, with me;
Some chap from District number Nine
Whose tippet cost the same as mine—
It's always great to hear 'em tell
How long they farmed, and Oh! how well;
The corn they husked, and Oh! how quick,
The apples that they used to pick;
But 'fore we part I often say,
In jest a nonchalantic way,
"I s'pose they're using on the whole
The same old sort of apple pole."

And then to string along the jest
I 'low that birch was 'bout the best,
That elm was fair and hickory good,
Or any swishy kind of wood;
And don't you know that two or three
Have pretty near got mad at me:
They never used a pole, I guess,
With any comprehensiveness;
Or else they didn't peel the tip,
Or kept it where the eaves would drip;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Or else they rushed their work so fast
They left it where they used it last;
Or else, perhaps, their pole was stole,
Or else they never had a pole.

For, Sakes Alive! our pole will stay
With me till apples pass away;
The pole we stored beneath the eaves
And kept from townies, toughs and thieves;
Of all the things that's worth a cheer,
Of all the early things that's dear,
Is that betapered pole that made
The highest apple feel afraid;
That brought the golden Russets down
As gems to grace Pomona's crown;
The way it made the "Gransirs" drop
You'd think, By Gosh! they'd never stop;
In picking times, upon my soul,
'Twas one of us—our apple pole.

To take that pole and whip a tree
Was sure a harvest jubilee;
The apples fell in spumey spray
And lay in winrows jest like hay;
We'd pick a cartful up, ker-pop,
And then lay bagfuls 'long on top;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

If going home had been up-hill
I guess we'd been a-stuck there still;
If I can have as fine a wand,
A pole like ours in worlds beyond,
I'll pick at my eternal ease
The fruit of the Hesperides,
And 'grave on my celestial scroll
A picture of our apple pole.

BLASTING ROCKS IN VERMONT

WHEN cutting corn is late
From wet or drought or smut,
There's time for little jobs
Outside the usual rut,
And so you take a cut
Acrost to Melvin Shedd's,
And hire him hard and fast
To come and help you blast
Some medder niggerheads.

Old easy-going Mell
Is glad to have you call;
He's jack of twenty trades
But still his house is small,
And early in the Fall
Before it's time to hunt,
If he can have his meals,
And work the way he feels,
He'll do a friendly stunt.

And so next day he comes
Prepared to "smite the rocks,"
And brings his fuse and drills
And blasting powder box,
With two peculiar locks,

And iron spoon and wedge,
And grooved-out tamping tool,
And leather cushion cool,
And hickory-handled sledge.

You pick the bluest "head,"
And Mell, he holds the drill,
And tells you how to strike
And keep his friendship still;
You whack with mighty will
Until you'd give a dime,
To try his leather seat,
And two, to know what meat
There'll be at dinner time.

When Mr. Spoon won't reach
You guess it's time to load,
And Mell unlocks the box
Wherein the "stuff" is stowed,
And, while he eyes the road,
It trickles through his hand,
And then he lays his fuse,
And tamps a "Northfield News"
Right in with dirt and sand.

As Mell digs up a match
'Tis sure the hour of Fate;
Its flicker sends you both
Behind the pasture gate:

But, Shucks! the blast you wait
Is jest a slimpsy fiz,
The wad blows out entire
And sets the grass afire—
That's all the "blast" there is.

A week you work away,
And when the job is through,
You find you've cracked one rock
And slightly jostled two,
And killed a blooded ewe,
And roused a nest of skunks,
And powder-faced your skin,
And drove a kneecap in,
And squandered forty plunks.

A VERMONT SUNDAY DINNER

TWO Sermons, Sunday school between,
Three sandy miles of going—
That's what we youngsters had to face
To make a Sunday showing;
When home we got nobody cared
If they was saint or sinner,
Our only hope was good dried beef
A-cooked in cream for dinner.

We got so hot a-driving back
We all was near to fainting;
The sand scaled off the wheels like paint
From off a job of painting;
And every time the harness squeaked
We felt our waists grow thinner—
Our only hope, as I've jest said,
Was creamed dried beef for dinner.

We got so cold a-driving back
The load was near to freezing,
And part of us a-coughed and hacked
Awhile the rest was wheezing;
And once we thought we'd have to send
For Doc "Lobelia" Skinner
To thaw us out, but we was cured
Before we'd finished dinner.

I've never seen such handsome beef,
No Sir; nor any sweeter,
A-cured in our old wooden bowl
With brine and saltedpeter;
It spruced the outer man right up
And satisfied the inner—
That creamed dried beef, that good dried beef
We had for Sunday dinner.

We hewed it off before we went
And put some water to it,
And jest the minute we got home
The stove begun to stew it;
Then in we stirred the sun-kist cream
That made the dish a winner—
I Vow! I'd go to meeting now
To get dried beef for dinner.

APPLE-PARING NIGHT IN VERMONT

THE biggest basket 'round our place,
It held a bushel and a half;
The other ones all went inside
Like shorts inside a cosset calf;
And when we boys got home from school
And saw it standing there in sight,
A-plumping full of big pound-sweets,
We knew 'twas apple-paring night.

And so when supper things was done,
We raised both table leaves and lit
An extry lamp, and got the frames
And wooden bowls and coring kit,
And strings and needles and a box
In which the skins and cores could light,
And went to work, like all possessed,
For it was apple-paring night.

The hired man, he jumped right in
And run the queer machine that pared;
You held the knife with either hand
And with the other turned and swared;
The thing was made by Gilman Sawin
That grandpa raised—a boy 'twas bright—
I wish I had that old machine
We used on apple-paring night.

We split 'em first, and then we cored,
And went all through like little men;
And then we had to start to string
And go all through the work again;
It made you tired the second time,
Because you knew that Riley Wright
Was home a-ciphering, jest to get
Ahead of you on apple night.

Sometimes a neighbor used to call —
I still can hear the knocker sound—
And if his wife was with him, too,
We'd all quit work and set around;
But pa would sometimes keep right on
A-stringing, that was his delight,
Especially if them folks was apt
To call on apple-paring night.

We men, we did the work complete,
For all agreed the wimmen folks
Had work a-plenty every night
A-mending mittens, coats and cloaks;
And though I thought that I was 'bused,
I see that my abuse was slight;
In fact, I'm glad we used to have
That weekly apple-paring night.

BURNING BRUSH IN VERMONT

MOST farms, in any place you please,
Have here and there some scattering trees,
Some oaks and elms and first growth stuff
A-standing where it's pretty rough;
And, p'r'aps, some orchard remnants, too,
Old trunks whose Pippin days are through;
And Gee! it used to do me good
When these went into winter wood—
I knew, despite the springtime rush,
There'd be a day for burning brush.

And so not far from April first,
When jokes and mud was at their worst,
We'd start some morning when the sky
Was deader than Dick Deadeye's eye;
And first, we'd hook the kitchen mop
And kerosene it wet as sop,
Then wrap it 'round some kindling sticks
And make a sort of fire-bug "mix,"
Then off we'd strike through mud and slush
To spend the day a-burning brush.

Our orders was from Uncle Dyer
To burn a stump with every fire,
And so we'd look around to see
Which stump had held the biggest tree;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

And then we'd put our kindling kit
Right square, By Gosh! on top of it,
And then we'd heap a Camel's Hump
Of brush all over Mr. Stump,
And then would come a breathless hush
While Uncle D. "touched off" the brush.

In less, By George! than half an hour
That fire begun to "get the power;"
We danced and sung above its roar,
Like Bolsheviki, hollering "More;"
The smoke rolled off along the ground
As though a train of cars was 'round;
The flames shot upwards high and higher
As if St. Albans was afire;
The clouds got red as railroad plush—
Both heaven and earth was burning brush.

I recollect one measly morn
I slipped along the powder horn,
And sprinkled on the oily wood
More than, I guess, I s'posed I should,
So that when Uncle lit his match
The thing went up like Irish thatch:
What followed changed my views entire
Concerning powderizing fire—
The way he made my trousers blush
Linked up my life with burning brush.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

There always seemed to be a strife
Between our fires and savage life;
The crows would light some distance off
And mock us with a cider cough;
The jays put up an awful fuss,
And once an adder stung at us,
And once a woodchuck give a jump
From right beneath a flaming stump—
The world with wonders seemed to gush
When we was out a-burning brush.

And once the blaze, with wicked sense,
Lit out for neighbor Newton's fence,
And 'fore we got the thing in tow
It burnt a rod of rails or so;
And sometimes, too, 'way after dark
We'd have to go and stomp a spark;
But still, as I those days recall,
They're worth an idle lawyer's scrawl—
I'd tramp again through mud and slush
To burn a rousing batch of brush.

A VERMONT BOOTMAKER

THERE'S lots of other themes and things
Than those the English laureate sings;
There's lots of other things and themes
Than those o'er which Tagore dreams;
For instance, I would sing today
Of *un petit cordonnier*:
Unawed, I rise to serenade
The boots that Loren Lawrence made.

No gentleman e'er put his foot
Inside a better fitting boot;
Too fine for me, I loved to meet
A pair on lawyer Wardner's feet;
To get 'em on unhitched no cough,
A little jacking got 'em off;
They always led the church parade—
The boots that Loren Lawrence made.

The webbing straps aflame with dye,
A white man's instep, high and dry;
The shank with jest a touch of steel,
The simple solid-leather heel;
The toe exactly square enough,
And nothing 'bout 'em wrong or rough—
So stood the boots that cast a shade
O'er boots by other makers made.

Devoid of nails and prickly pegs,
They fitted men with manly legs;
The soles besmelt so strong of oak
They'd sprout if they was put a-soak;
The uppers, when the soles was gone,
You still could strop your razor on—
All other boots was second grade
Beside the boots that Loren made.

I wonder where his tools repose,
And where his lasts, if living, doze;
His shave, his lamp, his favorite awl,
His bench that stood against the wall;
His hammer, king of all the kit,
That earnt ten cents each time it hit;
Ye implements of Loren's trade,
Ye boosted well the boots he made.

Oh! tell me, What Vermonter last
His boots inside the barrel cast?
Who finally, of Freedom's band
Threw up, as 'twere, his bootless hand?
Who last of all, exclaimed "Alack!"
And burnt his trees and chucked his jack?
And who again will serenade
The boots that Loren Lawrence made?

TOO MUCH LAKE CHAMPLAIN IN VERMONT

IF Lake Champlain was ten times smaller
I'm sure we'd have ten times more fun;
We'd all go boating after supper
And come home rested, every one;
We'd row and sail and scull and paddle,
We'd all get tissued-up and taller—
We'd be a different race of beings
If Lake Champlain was only smaller.

Champlain discovered too much water,
Too many whitecaps, coves and capes;
Too many headlands where the squall-sprite
Delights to get us into scrapes;
I don't exactly want to blame him—
Our first Canadian friend and caller—
But even if it hurts his feelings
I wish his lake was ten times smaller.

We'd have a smiling little lakelet,
And not a raging inland sea;
'Twould be a mile or two to Plattsburg,
To Rouses perfumed Point but three:
'Twould be great fun to pass Stave Island—
No bigger, much, than half a dollar—
Oh! there'd be sport and plenty of it
If Lake Champlain was ten times smaller.

We'd get some joy into our systems,
We'd get our socks and sainthood tanned;
We'd have a dandy Champlain club house
That wasn't built on railroad land;
There'd be a splendid show of sport clothes,
From wide-wale skirt to hemstitched collar—
I'll leave it to the Klifa ladies
If Lake Champlain should not be smaller.

The air would fairly bloom with banners,
And Cap'n Rockwell, he'd be there,
And run a little fleet of joy boats
And never think of charging fare;
There'd be a hunderd yachts and yachters
Where now there's one old yawl and yawler—
I tell you what, we'd all be different
If Lake Champlain was only smaller.

There'd be aquatic tilts and tourneys,
The kind they have up near Lachine;
There'd be a shell game every Thursday
And every June a Water Queen;
We'd meet, we'd laugh, we'd flirt, we'd chatter,
We'd all grow talkative and taller—
It seems to me Professor Perkins
Might try and have the Lake made smaller.

A VERMONT COUNTRY STORE

OUR village store will always be
A mental stomping ground for me;
The spot from which my fancies roam
And where they rest when I get home;
The hamlet's central point and hub,
The only and exclusive club;
The place where handsaws, hats and teas
A-hit it off with chalk and cheese;
The reservoir of law and lore
And calico—the village store.

The meeting place of them that knew
Jest what the world was coming to;
Through all my youthful years I saw
And heard them doctors spound the law;
Old Uncle Doctor Zenas Blake,
And Doc Epaphroditus Dake,
Lycurgus Pike and Nailkeg Small,
And Cap'n Philo Dumbitall:
Their names have reached no foreign shore
But they was famous 'round the store.

You can't abuse them folks to me,
They saw as fur as I could see;
Their cows was named, their teams was matched,
Each Fall they had their buildings patched;

They knew what kind of chimbly fit
The parlor lamp and how 'twas lit;
Their tax receipts, a certain crop,
Was laid away, the last on top;
The clothes was settled for they wore
Although they hung around the store.

Some thought so many men about
A-kept the wimmen traders out,
And once, they say, Amanda Clapp
Told Zenas Blake to close his trap;
But widder Wood was 'tother way,
She'd stay and talk and talk and stay,
'Twas give-and-take and touch-and-go,
Though what that means I don't jest know—
I s'pose it tries a merchant sore
To please 'em all around a store.

One wintry day up drove the stage
And out besteped Miss Nancy Page,
And 'Curgus Pike, a-setting there,
Got up and pushed along his chair
And said, "A very chilling storm,
Set down and get your tootsies warm."
But, Sakes Alive! the pelt he got
Was what you'd call a Willard swat—
They didn't speak to girls no more
For quite a while around the store.

One night Jack Jubb, and he knew how,
Was leading past his pulling cow,
When Nailkeg Small from where he set
A-hollered so I hear him yet,
“Jest turn her over on her back,
She’ll snake a darn sight smoother, Jack:”
Oh! there was wit enough displayed,
And everything was brisk but trade,
And yet the merchant, Azro Mower,
Made thirteen thousand ’round that store.

**PUTTING THE CREAM IN THE WELL
IN VERMONT**

WE all have seen a sultry spurt
Along in mid-July,
When gallus buckles stain your shirt
As black as whisker dye;
When jackknives rust and sideboards "seize,"
And lightstand doors beswell—
That's when we used to put the cream
'Way down inside the well.

When burdocks wilt and saltshakes balk
And ink writes through your sheet;
When robins pant and rabbits walk
And hens lay down to eat;
When grinstones crack at dead of night,
And sometimes jars of jell—
That's when the cream pail had to go
At twilight down the well.

The last of all the chores and cares
A "scorcher" brought about,
Was running down the bulkhead stairs
To fetch the cream pail out;
With butter eighteen cents a pound
We had no cream to sell
Or use or lose—we kept it sweet
'Way down inside the well.

We had a butchering gambrel 'round
To lay acrost the top
Of Mr. Well, because we found
It wouldn't roll or flop;
To this we sailorized the rope,
For if a thing befell
That rigging, what a mess there'd be
'Way down inside the well!

It made a feller stop and think
To stiddy down that pail,
For when the bottom struck the drink
There still was time to fail;
And such glub sounds come crumping up
You held your breath a spell—
'Twas ticklish business putting cream
'Way down our deep old well.

But now the trucks come 'round and glean
The cream, and sad but true,
They've built a tank for gasoline
Inside the well I knew;
There's nothing left but these old thoughts
That ring a little knell
Of recollection o'er the cream
We storaged down the well.

NATURE FAKIRS IN VERMONT

I THINK I've read about enough
Of this denatured "Nature" stuff;
I don't desire no city chap,
That never set a woodchuck trap,
To write a piece for me that tells
How woodchucks lay their eggs in wells;
That eels are fond of pusly greens
And chipmunks live on pork and beans.

Such startling facts these fellers find
You'd s'pose that folks was deaf and blind;
They'll pick a feather off the fence,
With learned look and joy intense,
And though you absolutely know
It grew on Johnny's cosset crow,
You'll read, ere long, a mess of mush
On how it warmed a hermit thrush.

They'll stop beside the railroad track
And pull a sketchbook big and black,
And sight at once an Ipswich wren,
And bobbin-breasted Greenland hen,
And hear a screw-tailed bobolink,
And sense a flinch and smell a mink,
And copy down a screech owl's note,
And watch a weasel change his coat.

They'll saunter towards the woodlot bars
And cast a glance and—shooting stars,
Oxalis, bloodroot, squirrel cup
And Injun pipe come sprouting up;
Pipsissewa and flannel plant
Are right on hand, like Charley's Aunt;
A stalk of bellwort, gently curved,
Bows low and begs to be "observed."

You see, they sell too many goods
For folks that know these fields and woods;
Old Rowland Robinson for me,
The man who could and couldn't see;
He knew Vermont in every chink
And wrote with truthful pen and ink;
You heard no "Nature" nonsense drop
In Lovel's Camp or Lisha's Shop.

To have a skinny chap come 'round
A-wearing specs that weigh a pound,
And say the cuckoos "put him through"
When you have never heard but two,
And claim the ladyslippers clog
His feet in almost every bog,
Is more than flesh and blood can stand
In Ethan Allen's honest land.

A VERMONT "DONATION"

IT'S funny how our ancestors
Of good old stock and station,
Would gather at the minister's
Without an invitation,
And eat him out of house and home
And call it "A Donation!"

The pastor in his study sets,
His wife repairs a stocking,
When towards the parsonage they see
A parish army flocking,
And next upon the door they hear
The general a-knocking.

The parson's wife, she opes the door,
Her being all a-flutter,
And in they file with paper bags
And pans and cans and clutter—
Before they halt, Lieutenant X
Upsets a plate of butter.

Upstairs they march and throw their duds
Upon the beds and bedding;
The fascinators, hoods and clouds
And caps they all was shedding—
More kinds of wraps than Charmian watched
At Cleopatra's wedding.

Then towards the dining room the girls
 Debouch to set the table;
Almira tears the papers off
 And hands the stuff to Mabel,
And even she 'twas bed-rid May
 Does all the child is able.

You never saw so many kinds
 Of pork and beans and pickle,
And ketchup, mustard sauce and things
 That make your tonsils tickle;
But all the beef and ham there was,
 It never cost a nickel.

But everyone was asked to eat
 And every one acceded,
And when the pastor slipped away,
 Unnoticed and unheeded,
He simply went to buy some cheese
 And other things 'twas needed.

At dark the children all swarmed in,
 And every child was ready
To eat a piece of bread and jam,
 A-fixed by Aunt McCready;
The bread crumbs soon was everywhere,
 Like Mattie Mason's "steady."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

They lit an unused fireplace last
And broiled the chimbly swallers,
And, Heavens! 'twas days before that house
Was fit again for callers;
The preacher figured he was out
From six to fourteen dollars.

And yet, them hours was bright for all—
The army got its ration—
And hoped it wouldn't be so long
Before the next "Donation,"
To which the parson said Amen!
With some deliberation.

VERMONT HOUSEKEEPING

I SHAN'T forget how much I learnt
Of prudent wives and their proceedings,
That time we got our fingers burnt
A-getting up a Course of Readings
The "Bureau" sent us through Vermont
To interest the lady leaders,
The queens, as 'twere, whose royal aid
Would boost our Massachusetts readers.

And so we laid our pipes with care
To get the proper force and suction;
We didn't call without a fair
And stylish note of introduction;
The upper-ten seemed well-disposed
To patronize our great reciters,
And several who approved our plan
Themselves were speakerettes and writers.

But here we had to take a seat;
Right here our royal progress ended;
We found that those high hands and feet
To many household cares attended;
Each queen, besides a-reigning hard,
Was sexton of her village palace,
She scoured the scepter up herself
And washed and wiped the doughnut chalice.

We set a-Tuesday as the day,
At stand the first, to hear the lions,
But soon a herald came to say
That Tuesday Lady Rushmore irons;
"Oh! I must keep my ironing day,"
She said so fast it made her stammer;
"I shan't let mildew spoil my clothes
To learn about the Tudor drama."

And so we pitched on Wednesdays next
For meeting day, but Lady Ferris
Was sorely mortified and vexed,
And she the Dame of "Sturtion Terrace!"
"I can't put off my baking day,"
She cried, "to 'tend your Wednesday sessions,
My bread is more to me than pre-
Or other Raphaelite impressions."

Then up we moved two notches more
And said we'd congregate a-Friday;
"Well, I guess not," said Queenie Gore,
"That day I make the parlor tidy;"
She took the ground beneath our feet,
She tore away the harbor jetty
By saying, "Put my sweeping off
To study D. and C. Rossetti!"

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

So fell our plans before the force
Of flat and stove and feather duster;
A dampness dimmed the "Reading Course,"
But all the kitchens kept their luster;
The busy queens still worked away,
The useful held the premier station;
The "Bureau" sent us off out West
To book the dates for Carrie Nation.

"HOPPING MAD" IN VERMONT

I S'POSE that young folks anywheres
Are seldom free from griefs and cares;
I've heard that girls in wealthy sets
A-have their special sorrowettes;
Perhaps the music teacher's song
Is off the key, or lasts too long,
And country boys, however hale,
Are doomed to certain hours of bale—
A-something comes to every lad
That's apt to make him hopping mad.

For instance, when the church would change,
And get a man of broader range,
Your folks, of course, put up the "Power"
Who comes to preach a trial hour;
He takes the parlor lamp for his,
And any handy thing there is,
Prefers the white meat, "if you please,"
And leaves the rest the neck and knees—
Say; don't it rile a hungry lad?
Say; don't it make you hopping mad?

For instance, take a day that's wet
When Dobbin needs his shoes reset;
With lots of hired help around,
They send you off to blacksmith Pound:

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

When Dobbin starts at some surprise
The blacksmith shouts, "Keep off the flies;
Here, take this switch, this sorrel-tail,
And do your part so I can nail"—
Say; don't it make your spleen feel bad?
Say; don't it make you hopping mad?

And when the grinstone gets a-towed
In haying time out next the road,
And you're selected as the one
To make that human kill-joy run,
And have to turn each morn at eight,
When Jennie Green comes through her gate,
And have to turn each eve at six,
When "Chuck" goes past with Dolly Dix—
Say; don't it beat an adder's brad?
Say; don't it make you hopping mad?

And when you're told to change your duds
And team to town with them there spuds,
The which you have to weigh outdoors
And cart around to different stores,
While all the factory fellers gop
And holler, "Hayseed, how's your crop?"
And little toughs that think they're smart
A-try to make your horses start—
Say; don't it twist a twin-six lad?
Say; don't it make you hopping mad?

"WORKING ON THE ROAD" IN VERMONT

SURVEYORS, yes; highway surveyors—

That's what the statutes used to call 'em,
But looking back, that legal title
Appears too all-fired long and solemn;
They didn't handle much surveying,
But 'bout the time the pie plant blowed,
They'd get the men and boys together
And go to fooling with the road.

'Twas great to see the "workers" gather
With plows, whips, jugs, stoneboats and shovels;
The 'Squire was always on the docket,
And all the Baxters, Bucks and Lovells;
They'd bring the same old wooden scraper
That wouldn't hold but half a load—
But what the Dickens did it matter
To Freemen working on the road!

Old Deacon Dewey couldn't do much,
And so he'd come with sweetened water;
And foolish Bill was there a-blubbering
How much he loved Miss Pansy Potter;
Poor Bill; they worked him jest exactly
As though a big back-tax he owed,
And yet he had no list nor nothing:
He lived to love—and mend the road.

They'd hitch a plow to Barret's oxen
And give the roadsides ripping battle;
Then spread the sod upon the roadway
And make it soft for sheep and cattle;
And every ten or fifteen minutes
You'd hear that Highway Boss explode—
"Stick in a waterbar: Gol Darn It!
Can't any of you fix a road?"

They always "worked" the sandy stretches,
But might as well have hoed the ocean;
They brushed and stoned the Perkins clay bank
Year after year with deep devotion;
They 'lowed they'd build no "railroad 'bank-
ments,"
However swift the river flowed—
They knew they'd be there in a twelve-month
A-working on the same old road.

One time the preacher begged to join 'em,
He said he knew how dirt was carted,
That day they spiked the sweetened water
And Goodness! what a mess it started;
Before that muss at last was settled
They'd 'pealed to every court and code—
The preacher found his early training
Was nix for working on the road.

At last they made Jake Sykes surveyor
To end some sort of local ruction;
Jake came from York State and was knowing
To what they called "good roads construction;"
He built some sixty rods of highway,
And built it strictly *a la mode*—
My Gracious! how the people hollered
At Jake's expensive piece of road.

But soon the kickers changed their keynote,
That road it more than stood the travel:
You see, he made a bed of cobbles,
Then stomped 'em down and put on gravel;
He left it rounding in the middle,
And said, "The waterbars be blowed!"
Three cheers for Jake—he knew the secret
Of really working on the road.

PITCHING HAY IN VERMONT

THERE'S opposites, go where you will,
All through create creation,
Some folks are keen on standing still
And others on rotation;
There's clouds and rocks and black and white,
There's ape and lovely swan,
And haying time has pitching off
To cancel pitching on.

Each worker hates with all his spleen
The other avocation,
For man can use his brother mean
In either situation;
The pitcher-on he gets 'em up
So fast to loader John,
That John would like to murder Hank,
The hand a-pitching on.

It fills the soul of John with slang,
It spoils his calculation
On length and breath and overhang
And tumble destination;
He can't load 'round and 'round, of course,
His "axis point" is gone,
And he's ashamed to say, "Hold up,"
To Hank a-pitching on.

The only thing for John, By Darn!
To do and not be yeller,
Is jest to get inside the barn
And rush the other feller:
When Hank gets anchored in the mow,
Say, that's the time for John
To show there's points in pitching off,
As well as pitching on.

If you could then see Hanky's brow
You'd note 'twas rather leaky;
If you could read his heart you'd vow
He'd joined the Bolsheviki;
If you could test the Hankian wind
You'd find 'twas nearly gone—
It's eye for eye and tooth for tooth,
This pitching off and on.

For Hanky swims and dives in hay,
It's hay his tonsils swaller;
It's "hay" his stifled voice would say
If he should ever holler;
He's buried in a night of hay
And only hopes for dawn,
To get his pardner back outdoors
And start a-pitching on.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The farmer feels no great dismay,
He sounds no note of sorrow,
He hopes they'll keep it up all day
And race again tomorrow;
In fact, he's jest a bit inclined
To bait both Hank and John,
For he's the kitty in this game
Of pitching off and on.

"CHANGING WORKS" IN VERMONT

A THING o'er which I muchly mused
In boyhood's agricultural days,
Was "changing works" and getting used
To other farmers' funny ways;
It helped us find the neighbors out,
And learn their different little quirks—
I'd like to know if farmers now
Keep up the game of "changing works?"

We learnt that Deacon Ira Shedd
Knew how to smoke, and Azro Hunt
Could chop with either foot ahead,
Or hoe with either hand in front;
And say; the laziest man in town,
He talked the most of drones and shirks—
Oh! they was edifying times
With everybody "changing works."

The work a man could do alone,
Two men could do three times as well,
From tagging sheep to picking stone,
Or peeling slippery elm to sell;
Besides, it kept our wits in shape,
And spared them Brattleboro clerks—
I've heard that wimmenfolks got queer
From jest the want of "changing works."

When Zenas Kingsbury changed with us,
He'd always wear his coat and vest
At meals, and so would Wesley Russ,
But Eugene Simpkins—he undressed;
He'd always take his jumper off,
And give his pants a pair of jerks
To make more room for mutton pie,
For 'Gene was strong on "changing works."

We always changed with Deacon Drew
In hoeing time, but 'twasn't fair;
Our land was clean, while witchgrass grew
On hizen thick as woodchuck hair;
But Deacon was a solemn man—
His face was never built for smirks—
And though we "lost," we kept right on
Year after year "a-changing works."

One year a renter, named McCrum,
Made up to change with Uncle Ned,
But jest the night before, I Snum!
He stabbed a neighbor in his bed;
That kinder broke the practice up—
We had no love for midnight dirks,
And didn't want to get too thick
With prison-birds "a-changing works."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

When old Al Osmore come each Fall,
We knew he'd talk the pump spout dry;
And Gracious Peter! 'Postle Paul!
Tom Thumb and Thunder! how he'd lie:
He'd tell how in the navy once /
He helped "pick off" a hunderd Turks,
But all the turks that he could "pick,"
Was four a day when "changing works."

GOING CROSSLOTS IN VERMONT

THE man who says with solemn pride
He'd rather go afoot than ride,
And adds to this strange speech beside,
That "crosslots" beats the road—
That man's the man for whom I've tried
To write this rural ode.

His hand-sled, dog and stick compose
About the closest friends he knows,
And after these his spirit flows
To certain tracks and trails,
While fences form the fiercest foes
His "beeline" soul assails.

He knows the time his legs can make,
He knows his forrard ex won't break,
His pistons pound, or windshield shake,
Nor is he apt to land
In Plymouth pond or Caspian lake
Or dig his head in sand.

In blizzard times he's out the first,
And when the going gets the worst,
He'll beat a horse to Cedarhurst,
And what is better still,
His pung don't scrape, his tubes don't burst
Or radiator chill.

And how he likes to start and go
To band rehearsal when the snow
Is gently falling—pick up “Joe”

Beyond the sawmill shed,
And get back home by nine or so
And have no horse to bed!

On 'lection days he strikes a gait
And plows right through the woodlot straight,
And gets to Center Town by eight,

While them with “power” to spare
Fetch in behind your Uncle Nate
A-driving Shanks's mare.

The place to pick a rozberry pie,
The knoll a fox will foxtrot by,
The holes to which the high-holes fly,

Within his eyeball float,
And stepping stones more satisfy
His feet than bridge or boat.

“Poor man,” you say, “he wanteth wit,”
But stop; the language doesn't fit;
We needn't pity him a bit,

We'd better save our breath;
He's happier than the whole blamed kit
That “wheel” themselves to death.

STOCK AND VERMONT PUNKINS

I'LL tell you what 'twas fun to do
Along the last of Fall;
I'll tell you how we done it, too,
In case 'twould please you all;
And first, you have to have a block
Of good old frozen ground,
A cornbarn with a door and lock
And lots of stock around.

Yes; real old-fashioned frozen ground—
Not jest a gravel bed—
And lots of head of stock around,
Precisely as I said;
A cornbarn door that locks fusstrate,
And punkins ripe and good,
And then the charm will operate
Exactly as it should.

You next unlock the cornbarn door
And climb the steps with care,
And pick some punkins off the floor,
As big as any there;
You hold one up that's yellowish red,
The kind you know they like,
A-jest to see if any head
Is on a hunger strike.

Them golden punkins then you dash,
With all the strength you're worth,
And break 'em all to smithering smash
Against the frozen earth;
By Golferinus! how they crack,
The pieces, how they fly!
A-like as not the seeds come back
And hit you in the eye.

My Stars! the way them cattle rare
And butt and buck and hook:
The old red cow is everywhere
Before your eyes can look;
The two-year-olds, they stomp and stamp,
The yearlings come to blows,
The heifers wear a frothy guimpe,
The cosset blows his nose.

In spite of these unchristian checks
Each head a-gets a piece;
You watch the chunks go through their necks,
Like lawyers through a lease;
And, as you turn the cornbarn lock,
You solemnly declare
That punkins, sure, was made for stock,
The same as hide and hair.

A VERMONT KITCHEN

THAT lady some call "Mrs. Looz,"
And others Marianna Evans,
And others Georgia Eliot, says
Of all the rooms beneath the heavens,
A farmhouse kitchen wins the prize
For being comfy, clean and cozy;
It makes a sleepy soul wake up
And makes a wideawake soul dozy.

She wasn't talking of Vermont,
And yet she was, for down in Putney
Where Uncle lived, I know 'twas true,
As well as up around Ascutney;
I guess 'twould hold in Halifax,
In Williamstown or Wells or Granby,
And folks are pizen neat, I've heard,
In Duxbury, Derby Line and Danby.

I'm pretty sure I recollect
A teapot kettle softly singing,
The waterpail not far away
With surplus drops about it clinging;
The dipper on its shiny nail,
The old guitarish clock a-ticking,
The dog asleep upon the mat,
A-growling in his dreams and kicking.

The stovehook, kinder halfway hid,
For fear the hired girl would break it;
The Stewart stove with steam all up
And bright as "Rising Sun" could make it;
I learnt to tell the time of day
Upon that long low stovehearth sitting,
A-looking in the clock's old face,
And grandma in the corner knitting.

The swinging shelves along the wall
A-full of cuff and collar boxes;
The pictures, one of Henry Clay,
The other, three fantastic foxes;
The great big chimbly closet, built
To fill the old brick oven quarter;
The bunch of sage, foredoomed to dust
Within the sassage maker's mortar.

The flats, a-standing soldier-like,
The one against the other's shoulder;
The holders hanging jest above,
A bright brass ring in every holder;
The wide-board floor we used to paint
At night with milk and yellow ocher;
The steelyards on the thirteenth hook,
The shovel jest beyond the poker.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

The ceiling flaked and cracked, but white;
The maple chairs, the varnished graining,
And through the buttery door the sound
At night and morn of milk a-straining;
The turkey wings for oven use
That smelt of sulphur jest a trifle,
But more than all that sense of home
No stranger, though a 'tramp, could stifle.

VERMONT FALL FEED

THE perfect barnyard has a gate
That opens on the Middle Mowing;
An old long gate on which in state
The morning rooster does his crowing;
And on the other side you'll find
A set of shiny bars, a-going
A-towards the pasture, 'tother way
Exactly from the Middle Mowing.

For twenty years the old red cow
Has hooked them bars each Spring with vigor;
You pegged 'em then, you peg 'em now,
For she's an everlasting digger:
The other head back up Old Red
By raring 'round, like sin, and lowing,
But not a-one goes near the gate
That opens on the Middle Mowing.

But when the pasture brook gets low—
So low you wish you kept a diary—
And when the barnyard "settles" so
It ain't the least resemblance miry,
When milking's done, you'll see Old Red
A-looking 'round and kinder going
Along a-towards the 'foresaid gate,
That opens on the Middle Mowing.

In 'bout a month your whole dumb herd
Hangs 'round that gate a-night and morning;
They won't go through the bars till spurred
By Rover's wolverinish warning;
And then they won't go off and feed—
You get a falling milkpail showing—
Old Red and all the other "Reds"
Are fighting for the Middle Mowing.

You hustle in your corn and fill
A-both barn floors chuck up, By Golly!
And slip your cider crop to mill,
And give the hops to Mother Hawley,
And pick the punkins, six big loads,
Though some of them are still a-growing—
That milk content has got to jump
If it should take the Middle Mowing.

The first white frost appears at last
And every Fall-feed thing is ready;
The gate swings in, the herd shoots past,
Like Injuns down a Big Horn eddy;
Your wife comes out upon the porch,
And says with half a tear a-flowing,
"We human beasts that tug and toil,
We never reach the Middle Mowing."

VERMONT KITCHEN POLES

There's lots of old Vermontish sights
Which keep our eyes in tow;
Which dog, as 'twere, our days and nights,
From Simonsville to Stowe;
Beneath whatever roof I step,
As here and there I rove,
I always look to find the poles
Above the kitchen stove.

Two great long spars on iron hooks,
And right acrost 'em laid
Two smaller ones—not much on looks
And seldom “factory made;”
I'm sure we shaved our own from spruce
That grew in Gridley's grove,
And there they hung, the last I knew,
Above the Stewart stove.

Each pole, it had two ends or more,
The large as well as small,
Four ends was towards the outside door,
Four towards the “dining hall,”
And hats, caps, frocks and drying cloths
Around them crossbars throve,
Until it looked like Salem street
Above the kitchen stove.

We used to put the frames aboard
On which was strung to dry
The big pound sweets we'd pared and cored
For applesass and pie:
How good them fruity garlands smelt!—
Where'er my footprints rove,
I look for apple on the poles
Above the kitchen stove.

I used up all the parts of speech
A-wishing I could hang
My cap 'way up there out of reach,
The same as Slimmy Lang;
He swore at me in Latin once
And said, "By Magnus Jove!
You'll have to grow to use the poles,
Or stand upon the stove."

The days the washing would a-froze
Outdoors, instead of dried,
We used to hang the colored clothes
Upon the poles inside;
'Twas fun to see 'em hanging there,
The different shades of mauve,
It showed you that the place for poles
Was 'bove the kitchen stove.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

If I should ever own a farm
Up here in Old Vermont,
It won't do any special harm
To tell you what I'd want;
Some ducks and squabs and Jersey cows,
About a half a drove,
But most of all a set of poles
Above the kitchen stove.

CANDIDATING IN VERMONT

Expenses of Page \$21,000; of Fletcher, \$22,000—*News Item*,
Sept. 27, 1916.

YOU bet that folks up here this week
Set up and noticed, when they read
How much it cost in old Vermont
To keep an inside horse ahead;
It's quite a generous sum to pay
To show the voters what they want;
It also shows the need of dough
To run for office in Vermont.

I guess a lot of common folks
Will add, subtract and then divide
To see jest why it comes so high
To keep an outside horse outside;
You wouldn't s'pose 'twould cost so much
To show the voters what they want—
It ain't no place for poor folks, sure,
To run for office in Vermont.

I guess that Edmunds when he read
That item made an Edmunds pause,
And wondered why a man will spend
So much to help to make the laws;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I guess if Morrill might return
To earth from his eternal jaunt
He'd think that office comes quite high
These days in honest old Vermont.

I'd like to be "upstairs" and hear
What Foot and Collamer will say
When they find out how much it costs
To draw the senatorial pay;
I guess you'd hear 'em both remark—
"There ain't a single thing we want;
We bless the Lord that we are through
With candidating in Vermont."

A VERMONT GENERAL-UTILITY MAN

WE used to have a man in town
That helped at everything;
He'd nail your sullen windows down
And teach your bird to sing,
And make a boy a sling;
He'd "treat" a hen that longed to set.
He'd mend a gosling's wing—
I've never seen a feller yet
That equaled Jerry King.

They said he come from Warner's Jog,
Or up by McIndoes,
For when he spied a floating log
He'd kinder twist his toes,
And then his eyes would close,
As though he heard the breakaway
Of river drives in Spring—
He never had too much to say,
Subjective Jerry King.

He'd fix your pump and sodder tin
And plug a pewter cup,
And get the clock wheels all back in
When Johnny give it up;

And shear a fancy pup,
And graft a tree and doctor sprains
And cure a hornet's sting,
And carry off a pet's remains—
Old useful Jerry King.

He'd work up anybody's wood,
Except for Strutty Mills,
And make a hedgehogged dog feel good
By picking out the quills;
And witness deeds and wills,
And shave a pauper that was dead
And rig a picnic swing,
And "watch" where canker rash had spread—
Our neighbor, Jerry King.

There seemed to be no end of things
That Jerry liked to do:
We always run to Jerry King's
When things would come in two,
For he was "king" of glue;
He'd hoop a tub and fit a key
And find your wedding ring
Right there beneath the lilac tree—
Ingenious Jerry King.

He'd tile a well and run a ditch
And lay a 'butment wall,
And comb and braid a lady's switch
Or steam her "waterfall,"
And clean a Paisley shawl,
And take a Y-shaped stick and go
And find a living spring,
And pot a fuchsia so 'twould grow,
Yes; that was Jerry King.

He'd help cut up and salt the meat
And make or scald the brine,
And mend a haircloth sofa seat
And trim a Concord vine,
And fasten on the line
To trout hooks made without a hole
In which to put the string—
I've never seen a human soul
That bested Jerry King.

WINDSOR, VERMONT

THE Windsor that I used to know
Was sorter slacker-like and slow,
 With only convicts busy;
But now that sleepy state is past,
And wheels and men go 'round so fast
 It fairly makes you dizzy.

The dust that lay on Common Hill,
It would have stopped a motor still,
 If there had been a motor;
And people thought they oughter stay
When anybody moved away
 To North or South Dakota.

The years went by with silent step,
And no one even hollered "Hep,"
 And scarce a whistle sounded,
Until that day—Hurrah for Blaine!
When patriotic Colonel Paine
 Had celery compounded.

But while she dozed, it came to pass
That Windsor cultivated "class".
 As her peculiar tillage;
Here ministers of state repaired,
And dreamy diplomats declared,
 "Oh! what a lovely village."

And more aristocratic heads
O'ertopped the town than Russian Reds
Have ever heaved a brick at;
And more patricians strolled the streets,
And set around on summer seats
Than you could shake a stick at.

One far-off year there came from Yale
A student trim and slim and pale
To be the village teacher;
And afterward so great he grew
He carried Andy Johnson through,
And saved the sinking Beecher.

And here, too, bloomed the builder's art,
And egg and bead and egg and dart
Adorned unusual finish;
Ionic columns lined the road,
The ladies took their tea from Spode
And watched their weights diminish.

But now the wheels, they race and roar,
The whistles blow, the payrolls soar,
And life is "automatic";
There's more reward, if less renown,
And once, By George! they say the town
Has voted Democratic.

A VERMONT RASCAL

'MOST every town has got, I guess,
A chronic case of wickedness,
Some scout to whom no sheep belong
Who smells of mutton mighty strong;
Who, minus cow and apple trees,
Enjoys his cider with his cheese;
A gray old rat, with income slim,
Yet outwardly it does for him;
Of course, if he should break his leg
He'd have to sue the town or beg.

He drives a horse that's adder blind
And never has her shod behind;
He teams a little—more or less,
With that old long low-seat express,
The tailboard marks on which are thought
By most to mean a charge of shot;
He's been a-met past midnight twice
On Cobble Hill by Doctor Price;
The night the butcher shop was burnt
He wan't to home, the sheriff learnt.

His wife's the kind that likes to shine,
And would if she was yourn or mine;
She likely comes from "down below"
And likely dressmaked years ago;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Her snow-white hair, black silk and veil
Are all that keeps him out of jail;
The moment that her dress departs
For church, he grabs his pole and starts
To fish up Barret's brook, and then
Down Story's brook a-home again.

The boy that builds a dam and gets
A pair of pretty trout for pets,
Some summer morning wipes his eye
For old Bill Boyd has seen 'em fry;
The day you put away your meat
He's 'round a-looking sharp and sweet;
Your new potatoes, however new,
He's sure to taste ahead of you;
You've got to watch your butnut trees
The very night there comes a freeze.

No fowl will ever roost in peace
Till Bill's dishonest breath shall cease;
No corner door will rest content
Till Bill's suspicious life is spent;
All piggery pens will feel a chill
Till excarnation tackles Bill;
The only comfort folks can draw
From this old life opposed to law
Is, that is may be counted on
He'll have no gravestone when he's gone.

THE MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT, FAIR

WHEN thirteen teams go past your door,
A-followed up by fourteen more
 And one or two to spare;
All heading towards the County seat,
With something in behind to eat,
You know them teams are bound to meet
 At Middlebury Fair.

Yes; that's the way the crowd convened
Before the world was gasolined,
 And if you'd cast an eye
At noon behind the Floral Hall,
You'd seen 'em eating, one and all,
A-hunks of cheese that wasn't small
 And pie that sure was pie.

The Monktoners appeared in flocks,
The Orwellites in solid blocks,
 And every place you went,
You met right up with folks you knew,
"The world" was there and happy, too,
From rich old coots to Hare-lipped Lew
 That wasn't wuth a cent.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

By noon the litter scattered 'round
Would make you s'pose the solid ground
Was formed of peanut peel;
The pedlars talked no end of chaff,
The "grease-spot-man" made millions laugh,
The one-eyed, two-tailed Weybridge calf
Made lots of wimmen squeal.

The sight our fambly liked the best
Was what they called the "cattle test;"
It made your heart-throbs pause
To hear a great long whiplash crack,
And see them oxen take up slack,
And haul a mountain fort and back
And leave it where it was.

But when they rung the trotting gong
That crowd become a "surging throng,"
And bolted towards the track;
They left each cage and coop and pen,
They cut the Shropshire-Dorset men,
Good bye to blooded hog and hen—
You couldn't hold 'em back.

My! how they watched the different heats,
And stood a-top the buggy seats
And almost come to blows;

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

One feller climbed the quarter pole,
And once a deacon flashed a roll,
And Uncle had his lap-robe stole
Right underneath his nose.

But going home—Je-hosh-a-phat!
You never saw a race like that,
Each hoss and every mare
Picked up their everlasting heels,
And dust and sass and scraping wheels,
And numerous spill-outs, cuts and keels
Wound up the Merry Fair.

JERICHO, VERMONT

THE first "big man" I ever knew
Was down in Windsor county,
He coopered fifteen hundred plunks
Each year of public bounty;
He run the prison and hung 'em all
Confined in murderers' row,
And everybody praised him up
And said he come from Jericho.

And when I went to Burlington
To be a hilltop student,
I lived on North Winooski street
With people kind and prudent;
A perfectly good man and wife,
And if you care to know,
They'd bought their place and moved to town
That very Fall from Jericho.

Anon I had a little bill
I wished to get gebroken,
And so I stepped inside a bank
And handed out my token:
I saw a tall man back behind,
And someone whispered low—
"Why, that's the president himself,
He made his pile in Jericho."

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I went to Boston after that
To start a legal karma,
And had a roommate that I liked
Whose patronym was Palmer;
One day I asked him whence he hailed,
Said he, "You ought to know
The place that palms the Palmers off
Upon the world is Jericho."

One 'lection time I lost a hat
In manner quite dramatic;
I bet Vermont had never had
A governor Democratic:
"There's been one, sure," the umpire umped,
"Galusha, don't you know
His old brick house is standing yet
Up near the bridge in Jericho?"

And when I got to be the kind
Of man that's known as "settled,"
And come to summer 'round Vermont
My soul was nowise nettled
To find that several neighbor folks,
As nice as neighbors grow,
Was either born or raised or both,
Or wished they was, in Jericho.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

I don't know much about the place,
Or what's the population,
But say; the way it hits my trail
It ought to be a nation;
I s'pose that if an angel's wing
Should stir the sunset's glow,
The golden wake would lead straight back
And touch the earth in Jericho.

WINTER CHURNING IN VERMONT

IT'S joy to churn on Juney morns
 When happy insects hum;
It's joy to churn when things go right,
 Although you're deaf and dumb;
It's joy to churn when nineteen turns
 Will make the butter come.

Your wife, she ups and pours the cream
 Inside the Filey churn,
And helps it with her butter-spat,
 For few have cream to burn,
And then she claps the cover on
 And calls to you to turn.

You pull along the broken chair,
 So calm and self-possessed,
You never even stop to shed
 Your cap or coat or vest;
You know it's only nineteen turns,
 Or twenty at the best.

But when against the old red ell
 December "Northers" beat,
And you're obliged to set the cream
 Beside the stove to heat—
Say; that's the time you wish you lived
 A-back on Summer street.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

For eighteen hours that cream has stood
Beside the oven door;
The fire you've kept would furnish steam
To heat a Rutland store;
You're jest as 'fraid of that there cream
As tigers was of Noah.

At last you start the game and churn
Right through from ten to six,
And then you guess the room's too cool,
Or something's out of fix,
And so inside the stove you slam
Another round of sticks.

You rest an hour, then crank ahead
Till midnight cuts your trail,
When mother comes and puts that cream
A-back inside the pail:
"In churning's lexicon," says she,
"There's no sech word as fail."

Next day two stiddy morning hours
You turn and turn and turn,
And then you grab the kettle up,
And while your eyeballs burn,
Six boiling water quarts you pour
Inside that stubborn churn.

Resplendent thought—in forty winks
Of anybody's eye,
That butter comes, your mind is saved,
And mother whispers, "Si,
What *will* you have?" and you respond,
"A piece of custard pie."

VERMONT WOOL CARDING

A-WHEN we used to shear the sheep,
And grandpa Tripp did up the wool,
He'd put his leather apern on
And give the strings a special pull;
And then he'd keep his specs a-peeled
The whole day long to find a fleece
With "staple" long and strong and white,
A fleece that hefted 'zactly right,
And free from taggings, ticks and grease.

And then some sunny summer day
When grandma thought she'd like to ride,
They'd wrap that fleece in cotton web
And lay it in behind with pride;
And then they'd start for Bailey's Mills,
A-where the water cards was at—
I see 'em going—grandma tall
And 'portant with her Paisley shawl,
And grandpa with his Greeley hat.

They left the fleece, but not the web,
And then in 'bout a month or so,
They went again to get the rolls—
A-whiter than enameled snow;

And that one fleece made parcels three
Of rolls, as soft as baby curls,
Or clouds that float on summer morns,
Each parcel fastened up with thorns
A-cut by Bailey boys and girls.

And then the woodhouse chamber saw
New kinds of doings—spinning wheel
And slow-poke swifts a-come to light
And stood beside the old clock reel;
And every pleasant afternoon,
As soon as grandma changed her cap,
And took her cup of Hyson tea,
That wheel would buzz like some big bee
A-chasing up a foolish chap.

As soon as all the rolls was spun
And skeined, we'd have a coloring day;
We'd go and get the butnut shucks
And shoemake buds we'd put away,
And when the skeins was steeped and steeped,
And looked as black as Satan's face,
Then grandma put some mordant in,
That come done up in heathen's skin,
To make the color keep its place.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

Then how the knitting needles jumped
Each evening all the Autumn through!
'Twas stockings, wristers, mittens, scarfs—
We all had something nice and new;
But gramp and grandma had the least,
Although they did the most of all,
And I'll not let myself forget
The loving work they did, nor yet
The Greeley hat and Paisley shawl.

RIDING HORSE TO CULTIVATE IN VERMONT

THE hottest seat in any state
Is riding horse to cultivate;
Your cotton pants, they warm right through,
And then the heat goes into you;
The backstrap hurts, a-like as not,
And so a-helps the heat keep hot;
The tugs are bound to pinch your toes,
And that don't cool you, Gracious knows!—
It's blood-heat work, plus six or eight,
A-riding horse to cultivate.

You see the scholars all go past
To school, and teacher going last,
And there you are stuck up on top
Of that old horse, a-wet as sop;
You hear the bell and know your mates
Are getting out their books and slates;
Alphonsine Blas and Bertie Bard
You know have gone to ciphering hard;
But you're behind your class and late,
A-riding horse to cultivate.

You wonder why they always till
The steepest side of every hill;
You have to rein Old Charley so
He'll walk a-next the up-hill row;

Each time you turn you get a warn,
At that, to keep him off the corn;
“Look out,” says dad, “see what you’ve done,
You’ve spoilt two hills and bunged up one”—
It’s feverish work in any state,
This riding horse to cultivate.

Each rod you shift your seat a bit
To make Old Charley’s ridgepole fit,
And when you strike a stone, ker-whack,
That sets the horse and harrow back,
You go ahead a-jest the same
And lunge against the starboard hame;
You hope it’s broke a tooth or two
For then your morning’s work is through—
It learns a chap to “calculate,”
A-riding horse to cultivate.

The only fun you have at all
Is resting near the pasture wall,
Some scattering apple trees that’s there
A-kinder cool the ambient air;
As dad sets down his eyesight strays
All ’round the gool and soon he says,
“A-while Old Charley rests his knees
Let’s clean them worms’ nests off them trees”—
Say; ’tishn’t strange that fellers hate
This riding horse to cultivate.

THE HILLS OF OLD VERMONT

THE "native" hills of Old Vermont
Are 'bout as good as hills can be;
They kindly met my opening eyes,
I hope they'll be the last I see;
When folks get back from 'round the world
They sorter fill a long-felt want—
There's nothing neater on the map
Than these old hills of Old Vermont.

They say Vermont if rolled out flat
Would equal Illinois in size;
But primaries then would cost so much
The rich might win and not the wise;
Our marble, too, would be soft coal—
A thing that some folks wouldn't want—
I think we'd better let 'em stand,
The solid hills of Old Vermont.

They ain't too green, they ain't too gray,
They ain't too high or dry or small;
They're awful pretty in the Spring,
But prettier in the fiery Fall;
And they're so smooth that you can farm
Clear up to snow-line, if you want,
Which isn't true of any hills
In any place except Vermont.

RHYMES OF VERMONT RURAL LIFE

If this was some big, level state,
We'd get the bitter with the sweet,
For Henry Ford might live in town,
Or unkissed Dowie down the street;
We'd have no gum, we'd have no talc—
The high school girls would come to want—
We'd better leave 'em be, I guess,
The useful hills of Old Vermont.

The man that doesn't like these hills
Must be tremendous hard to please,
Or have a case of what Fred Wells
Would call the Enosburg disease;
Jest dub me "hill dog" if you will—
Use any nicking name you want—
But I'm in hopes my eyes may close
Amidst the hills of Old Vermont.

FINIS



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Cady, D. L.

Rhymes of Vermont rural
life.

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